



ISAACUS KIMBER, V.D.M

Natus 1 Dec. MDCXCII.

Ob. 28 Jan. MDCCLV.

Ætat. Suae LXII.

Smith Pinx.

Verbi Dei Minist. r.

T. Kitchen Sculp.



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S E R M O N S

On the Most Interesting
RELIGIOUS, MORAL,
AND
PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

By the late Reverend and Learned

Mr. *ISAAC KIMBER.* *h*

Printed from his own MANUSCRIPTS.

To which is prefixed,

MEMOIRS of the LIFE and WRITINGS of the
AUTHOR.

L O N D O N :

Printed by, and for C. and J. ACKERS, in St. John's-Street ;

And Sold by J. NOON, at the *White-Hart*, in *Cheapside* ;
and R. BALDWIN, at the *Rose*, in *Pater-Noster-Row*.
M.DCC.LVI.

STERMOS

RELIGIOUS MORAL

AND

PRACTICAL SUBJECTS

4455 C10

MR. JAMES KIMBLE





T O

John Keeling, *Esq;*

One of His MAJESTY's Justices of the
Peace for the County of *Middlesex*.

S I R,

THE Author of the following
Discourses, who was person-
ally known to You, was a-
dorned and actuated by all those mild

A 2

and

DEDICATION.

and sociable qualities, which never fail of endearing a man to his fellow creatures; and the principles and maxims therein inculcated and enforced, are a lively representation of his own honest mind.

How naturally, Sir, then, am I directed to a Patron, in You, for this Volume; a Patron, who, by his integrity, and universal charity, unfettered by the narrow prejudices of party or opinion; by his great love to his fellow creatures, and his daily exercise of the greatest and noblest of the Christian virtues, plainly proves the possibility of living up to these heavenly precepts. All that have the pleasure to know You, to live within the sphere of Your activity, will readily absolve me of adulation in what I have advanced; and as to the envious, the malicious, the ill-tempered, and the splenetick, they cannot,

DEDICATION.

not, it is plain, relish these just encomiums; for it is the undoubted characteristick of bad minds, that, having no title to praise themselves, they can neither conceive, nor will acknowledge, the justice with which it is given to the good and the deserving.

The kindness, the generosity, with which You have encouraged the subscription to these remains of my Father, would, indeed, have been singly a motive for this Dedication; but give me leave, Sir, to say, with all that honest warmth of gratitude that has taken possession of my heart, I am proud, to the last degree, that Your name appears before them, as You are really an example of all those exalted graces it was their design to inspire.

That You may continue long, the delight and comfort of your Family

DEDICATION.

and Friends; and, as a Magistrate, to be *a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them who do well*; and that, after participating of every blessing this mortal life can afford, You may reap the reward of all Your virtues, in another and better state of existence, is the sincere prayer of,

S I R,

Your most obliged,

Most obedient,

And most humble Servant,

Edward Kimber.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE and WRITINGS

Of the Reverend

Mr. *ISAAC KIMBER.*

THE AUTHOR of the following discourses, was born at *Wantage*, in *Berkshire*, on *December 1, 1692*, and received the rudiments of a learned education from the Reverend Mr. *Sloper*, then master of a private grammar-school in that town; and who had, some years before, the mastership of the free-school there; but was turned out, by the bishop of the diocese, upon the evidence of a busy informer, for scrupling to take the oaths to the government. This gentleman, as our Author was very frequently used to say, bating the peculiar principles he held, was a most worthy man, an excellent tutor, and had the happiness of instructing some youths, who afterwards made a great figure in the learned world; amongst whom was the late very excellent Prelate, Dr. *Butler*, Bishop of *Durham*. Under Mr. *Sloper* he made a considerable progress in the *Greek*

and *Latin* tongues, in which he was much forwarded by the kind aid of Mr. *Jones*, the very learned pastor of the Baptist Church at *Wantage*, who, taking a particular liking to him, made him his companion; and, in his society, he has often told me, he spent some of the happiest moments of his life. Mr. *Jones* was a man of some fortune, and had a well-chosen library, to which his pupil had free recourse; and as he was also much turned to mathematical pursuits, his young friend reaped great profit from his conversation: And, perhaps, to his intimacy with Mr. *Jones*, may, in great measure, be ascribed his inclination to the ministry; tho' indeed it was what his parents wished he would direct his mind to, and for which he seemed peculiarly designed, by his serious, thoughtful temper, which was visible in his earliest youth, and his natural love of virtue and sobriety, and abhorrence of every thing trifling, vicious, or prophane.

With the stock of knowledge he had acquired in the country, he came up to *London* to perfect himself in the languages, under Professor *Ward* of *Gresham College*, and in academical exercises under the direction of the Reverend Mr. *John Eames*, F. R. S. And the Reverend Mr. *Joseph Burroughs* has given ample testimony of the swift progress he made under these excellent instructors*; a testimony

* See that gentleman's sermon occasioned by his death, p. 23.

mony the more to be relied upon, as that learned gentleman was witness to, and encouraged him in, his studies.

When he had qualified himself for the ministry, he was very particularly patronized, by the Hon. *Joseph Collett*, Esq; late Governor of *Fort St. George* in the *East-Indies*; and, to the conversation of that gentleman, and his brother, Mr. *Samuel Collett*, whose christian labours have endeared him to all good men, he used to ascribe the establishment, in his mind, of those generous sentiments of universal love and charity, that enmity to imposition and persecution, in matters of mere faith, which governed him throughout the remainder of his life: For he used to confess, that he had imbibed some narrow *Calvinistical* notions in the country, either from his parents, or his beloved pastor, which, when his reason was better informed, he departed from with openness and ingenuity.

It is not my business, in the short compass I have allotted myself, to give a minute detail of every hardship, and they were many, that our Author endured at his first setting out in life; the dictatorial manner in which he was treated by some bigots, on the one hand, which gave exquisite pain to his mind, and the concessions his modesty and dependency forced from him, to those of a more free way of thinking, on the other, he ever remembered with regret. His marrying at twenty-five

MEMOIRS of the Life and

five years of age, before he had gained a settlement in the world, subjected him still more to the humours of others, which the gentleness of his disposition gave him not the power or courage to contradict : But I would not be understood that he was ever guilty of any criminal compliances ; no, he maintained his integrity and his virtue untainted, thro' the whole course of his life. If, however, he met with harsh and unchristian treatment from some persons, he was fully recompensed in the constant friendship of other valuable, esteemed patrons, amongst whom he ever spoke with a particular veneration of the late Dr. *Hunt*, Mr. afterwards Sir *Nathaniel Hodges*, Dr. *Gale*, and some others, whose loss he never mentioned, without being melted even to tears.

As he did not meet with the encouragement he expected as a minister, he very early engaged in the business of a writer, and one of the first productions he gave to the world, was the *Life of Oliver Cromwell*, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*, in octavo, printed for Messrs. *Brotherton* and *Cox*. This piece met with a very good reception from the publick, and has passed thro' several editions, universally esteemed for its stile and its impartiality ; and as the Author's name was not made publick, tho' it was always known to his friends, it was at first very confidently ascribed

ed to Dr. *Gibson*, Bishop of *London*. Soon after, he was concerned with Messrs. *Bailey*, *Hodges*, and *Ridpath*, in compiling a history of *England*, in four volumes in 8vo. which was printed for Messrs. *Midwinter*, *Fayram*, *Batley*, &c. in 1722, the 3d and 4th volumes of which were solely his, and a large impression was disposed of. A few years afterwards, he wrote the life of Bishop *Beveridge*, which is prefixed to the folio edition of his works, of which he was the Editor.

In the year 1724, he was called to the pastoral charge, in conjunction with Mr. *Samuel Acton*, at *Namptwich* in *Cheshire*; but as his going there was preceeded by an attempt to fetter his mind with subscriptions to, and impositions of articles of faith, so his abode was rendered uneasy, for the three years he officiated amongst them, by the untoward and perverse spirits of some of the principal persons of the congregation; and, I remember, his intimacy with the worthy incumbent of the parish, and Mr. *Vaudrey*, the *Presbyterian* minister in that town, was insinuated as a crime, in that it betokened his hanging loose to some fundamental points which they thought essential to church-communion and salvation. I mention this instance, as a specimen of many other as wise objections against his conduct, from which some of them thought themselves warranted to withdraw their promised subscriptions from him, either in whole, or in part; and

and a principal person, then near eighty years of age (by whose promise of leaving an annuity to the congregation, at his death, for the better support of their minister, he had been principally induced to quit *London*) once more entering into the marriage state, and threatening not to leave them one farthing, he found he could no longer support his family upon the scanty pittance his salary was reduced to, and determined, after much conflict within himself, to leave them, which, after many altercations on both sides, he executed at the latter end of the year 1727. The modest chearfulness of his behaviour during his residence at *Namptwich*, had so endeared him to most of the principal people there, of all parties and persuasions, that his departure was very much regretted; and, indeed, when he took leave of the congregation, which he did in a pathetick farewell sermon, most of them wept. His affection to them was very great, and it must be said that most of them loved and revered him.

Upon his return to *London*, he officiated, as morning preacher, or assistant, to his much loved and learned friend, Dr. *John Kinch* *, in *Old Artillery-Lane*, and, occasionally, at *Pinnars-Hall*, for Dr. *Hunt*; and was also engaged in correcting the press, and other literary business, for Mr. *John*

* By whom, upon his death-bed, he was recommended as his successor; but the history of his being rejected, is too long to be inserted.

John Darby, and others. At the same time he compiled a periodical pamphlet, called, *The Monthly Chronicle*, which subsisted from *January*, 1728, to *May*, 1732, and then was dropped. In part of this period, he was likewise concerned with Mr. *Drew*, of the *Union Fire-Office*, as his assistant, and supported these various labours with a quiet and even temper, and a chearful mind, tho' visited with a very sore affliction in his Wife's being deprived of her reason; a misfortune, which, he sometimes would hint, was brought on, by her deep sense of the ill treatment he had met with at *Namptwich*. This malady had two several stages; for some years it displayed itself in ravings and fury, by which his person was often endangered, and then sunk into an indolent kind of frenzy, which continued all the rest of her life. As they had been a remarkably happy couple, this misfortune lay very heavy upon him, and put him to various and great expences, even beyond what his circumstances could well support; but a patient submission to, and firm trust in Providence, enabled him to bear a sad complication of distresses, like a man, and a christian. His love for her seemed rather encreased by this dreadful visitation; and, after twenty years and upwards, that she continued thus afflicted, her death gave him the most poignant sorrow he ever felt, and, in some measure, contributed to hasten his own.

In

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In

MEMOIRS of the Life and

In the year 1731, he was concerned in a periodical work, of which Mr. *Charles Ackers* was one of the proprietors, and that worthy Gentleman, once kindly and humanely enquiring into his circumstances, and finding them very narrow, generously offered to make room for him, as corrector, at his office. With him he continued for two or three years, and then his old master, the learned Dr. *Ward*, pitching upon him, in conjunction with the Rev. Mr. *Edward Sandercock*, to carry on his grammar-school, near *Moor-Fields*, which he quitted in their favour, he consented to his leaving him. This seminary had always been in high estimation, from the great character of the master; and the prices paid by the scholars were very considerable. They carried it on for some time with success; but, by one means or other, it beginning to decrease in the number of pupils, Mr. *Sandercock* quitted it to Mr. *Kimber*, who held it singly, for about half a year, and then was obliged to relinquish it. And now, he again recurred to his fast and faithful friend, Mr. *Ackers*, who reinstated him in his former place, and it must be said to the honour of the learned gentleman he discharged, to make room for him, that far from shewing any resentment thereat, he afterwards did him many considerable services. It is natural and reasonable to make mention here, of that firm and settled

tled friendship between Mr. *Ackers* and our Author, which was his main support through the remainder of his days. That Gentleman, who venerated his virtues, and loved his person, made it his study to render him as easy and happy as his situation would allow; nor was his son Mr. *John Ackers*, at all behind hand, in treading in his father's steps. It may be said, the friendly assistance of the former, was ever extended to his most pressing necessities; and those good offices were returned by a sincere and thorough attachment on his part; and such tender and delicate sentiments, that to mention their names in a disrespectful way, though in the most distant manner, could never be born by him with any tolerable degree of patience, and was ever a motive for his quitting the most favoured company. Indeed, it seemed to be the constant study of that whole family, to do every thing in their power to oblige him; the late Mrs. *Mary Ackers* loved him as a father, and the present Mrs. *Margaretta Maria Ackers*, ever shewed him respect and deference, and after his decease, displayed the utmost regard to his memory.

As the business he was engaged in, demanded his constant attendance, he had not latterly those opportunities of seeing his old friends, which he formerly enjoyed, and being, by the decay of his sight, and the neglect
of

of that denomination of dissenters to which, by principle, he was attached*, entirely confined to sedentary labour, he seldom appeared in the pulpit, except when called upon by the Rev. Mr. *Burroughs*, whose name he never mentioned, but with an accent of the highest and most fervent affection, the late Rev. Dr. *James Foster* and Mr. *Joseph Morris*, his bosom friend, who just lived to regret his departure, and the Rev. Mr. *Barron*, of *Deptford*. In the year 1740, he wrote the reign of his present majesty, which is added to the last edition of *Howell's Medulla Hist. Ang.* and soon afterwards, an History of England, in one volume 8vo, printed in 1746, for Mr. *Thomas Cox*, which will hereafter, perhaps, be esteemed, by competent judges, the best Abridgment of the English History extant. The literary performances, that, during the last twenty years of his life, he either prepared for the press, or lent his assistance to, one way or another, would be too numerous for mention; as his judgment in those matters was consulted by all ranks of Authors; and, but that the disorder of his wife, the follies and misfortunes of his children were always a dead weight upon his labours, would, in conjunction

* This is not intended as a reflection; though I could much enlarge in the proof of it. Particular persons amongst them, were ever ready to do him service, and actually did confer repeated favours upon him, of which he ever retained a due sense.

junction with his constant employs, at least have afforded him competency, ease and happiness in his declining days.

It would be difficult to add any thing to the character already given of him by the Rev. Mr. *Burroughs*, in the discourse before quoted, or to give a better idea of his manner of preaching, and the following discourses; they indeed will best discover the amiable disposition of the Author. If he suffers at all by this posthumous publication, all the fault rests with me; though I honestly recurred, to what I knew were his latest sentiments, in selecting the sermons that compose it. Mr. *Burroughs's* want of health rendering it impossible for him to undertake the friendly office, which otherwise, he would willingly have performed, and the death of Mr. *Morris*, who had engaged in it, threw them into my hands, and, at the desire of *Charles Ackers, Esq;* whose regard to his friend's memory, was the motive of their being presented to the world, I willingly became the Editor. No doubt is to be made, that, if the author had prepared them himself, for the press, many luxuriances would have been pruned, and many additions made, and the language would certainly have been more improved; for, this I may assure the publick, that no liberties were taken in making alterations or additions, and that they were faithfully printed *verbatim* from the author's own manuscripts.

Edward Kimber.

TO THE
M E M O R Y

Of the Reverend and Learned

Mr. *ISAAC KIMBER.*

FAIN would a Muse, by thee first taught to soar,
In plaintive lays, thy sudden loss deplore;
Paint the distressful pangs each bosom swells,
Where pining grief, where gloomy sorrow dwells:
But reason pleads—'Tis selfish all, and vain,
Tho' loss to us, thy change, to thee 'tis gain;
Thy faith thou'st kept—the dreadful strife is past,
And crown'd with bliss, thy joys shall ever last.

See Friendship droops, the trickling tear descends,
And bursting sighs thy doleful hearse attends;
Thus art thou wail'd, who knew'st the ev'ry art
To sooth, to meliorate, to cheer the heart.
In thee THE ISRAELITE INDEED was seen,
No guile thy soul disguis'd, deform'd thy mein;
All fair, all pure, thy mental worth still shone,
And made each breast that knew thee all thy own.

Wisdom, bright radiance, Science, urg'd thy flight,
Thro' all their flow'ry paths, to heaven and light;
Learnt thee, with fond avidity, to rise,
To claim an int'rest with thy kindred skies;
To spurn the idle toys of mortal care,
And place thy firm, thy sure dependance there.

Warm

On the late Rev. Mr. ISAAC KIMBER.

Warm in Religion's cause, her steady friend,
Thy precepts strove our hearts, our lives t'amend ;
And free from heat, or superstitious zeal,
Clearly the sacred truths thou did'st reveal ;
Thy doctrines with thy lov'd example squar'd,
So much admir'd, so copy'd, so rever'd.

Enamour'd with the task, the Muse would stray,
Thy private worth, thy virtues all display ;
Would weep, lov'd, honour'd shade, in thy decease,
A Sage that sooth'd the gentle hours of peace ;
That through our souls, with irresistible sway,
Darted unfully'd reason's forceful ray :
But let these pages speak thy heav'nly mind,
By every Christian, social grace refin'd ;
Where thy great MASTER's laws, all pure, divine,
With added powers of mild persuasion shine.

Freed from the ills that wait this wretched life,
Its toils perpetual, wasting cares, and strife,
Safe art thou landed on th'immortal shore,
Where pains, where weakness, discords vex no more.
And, ah ! when Providence with wise design,
Shall call us hence, may we thy concert join ;
And safe arriv'd in those bright realms of day,
Have all our earthly sorrows wip'd away !

Edward Kimber.

A

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THE

T H E
C O N T E N T S.

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The Fear of G O D, a fundamental Duty.

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† *The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. Page 1, 15*

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For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

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I JOHN ii. 17.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever.

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Proofs of the Resurrection and Final Judgment.

ACTS xvii. 31.

Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

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SERMON XXI.

SERMON XXIX.

SER-

S E R M O N I.

The Fear of GOD, a fundamental
Duty.

PROV. xiv. 27.

*The ^x fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to
depart from the snares of death.*

WHOEVER makes the least obser-
vation, must see that there is a
great deal of misery in the world ;
and there is reason to think that
there is much more misery than appears to
common observers, being hid from their
eyes by splendid and gay outfides. Now
all this misery, whether apparent or other-
wise, is occasioned by vice, or by men's act-
ing otherwise than reason, and truth, and
righteousness require. By vice, I say, ei-
ther in ourselves or others : If we are vicious
ourselves, and do not repent, this will infal-
libly bring real misery upon us, both in this
state, and in any other we may exist in ; if
we are virtuous, and yet suffer, this is occa-
sioned usually by the vices of others, who
are injurious, oppressive and unreasonable.

B

Indeed

SERM.
I.

SERM. Indeed some kinds of misery, as sickness and death, are the natural result of our present state; but even this state of mankind is declared in revelation to be occasioned by sin, *i. e.* the sin of our first parents, by whom death, and all its attendants came into the world; and many of these inconveniencies may be heightened and increased by vices and irregularities of our more immediate ancestors. Now vice being of such a pernicious nature both to ourselves and others, being the occasion of so much misery in this world, and of all the misery that is, or may be in a future state, we ought by all means to avoid, or timely to forsake such a destructive thing, and the means of avoiding it should be most highly esteemed, regarded, and attended to by us. The word of God chiefly furnishes us with these means of avoiding sin and vice, but the first and principal of these, and which includes all others, is that mentioned in our text, *viz.* the fear of God; *The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.* I shall here,

I. Consider and explain the fear of the Lord.

II. Shew the benefit, advantage and necessity of that principle, in its being *a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*

I

I. I

a fundamental Duty.

3

I. I am to consider and explain the fear of the Lord. *The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, &c.* SERM. I.

By the fear of the Lord we are sometimes to understand the whole of religion and virtue; and some particular parts of it are sometimes to be understood hereby, the cause being put for the effect; as religion and righteousness are the effect of, or flow from the true fear of God. Thus, *Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c. Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, &c.* So that the fear of the Lord which the Psalmist would teach men, was to be righteous, to depart from all evil, and to do good; as this was the proper, natural, and genuine effect of the true fear of God. And so we may understand it in our text, that the sincere practice of religion and righteousness in all its parts, which flows from the fear of God, *is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death*; or that the sincere practice of virtue will preserve men from misery and death, and lead them to life and happiness. But I would chuse here to understand the principle itself, of *the fear of God*, and in that view to treat of it; which indeed makes no

SERM. material alteration in the sense of our text :

I.  For to say that religion and righteousness, or the avoiding evil and doing good, which are the effect of the fear of the Lord, preserve men from misery and death, and lead them to life and happiness, is much the same as to say, that the true fear of God in the heart, as it preserves men from sin, and disposes them to the sincere practice of righteousness, is itself, by this means, *a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death.*

This principle then, *viz. The fear of the Lord*, is an awful and reverential respect and regard to God, according to his most excellent nature and perfections, and the relation we stand in to him ; it is a fixed and habitual reverence of him in our hearts, as the first, supreme and eternal being, who is self-existent and independent, from everlasting to everlasting, who gives being to all persons and things, and by whom they all subsist and are sustained and preserved, who himself possesses all possible perfections, and is the supreme author, and first cause of whatsoever has existed, or does, or shall exist : And as the divine perfections do infinitely transcend the powers of any creature, or of all creatures put together, so they who truly fear God, have a greater awe and reverence of him than of any, or all beings besides. I shall here a little speak to those perfections which render God the just object of our fear

a fundamental Duty.

5

and reverence, or consider under what characters they who truly fear him do more especially regard him, viz. as an almighty, omniscient, most holy, just and good being. SERM.
I.

1. They who truly fear God regard him as an omnipotent or almighty being, and fear him, or have an awful reverence of him from that consideration; that he has all power, and can do whatsoever he pleases; that it is in vain for any one to resist him, there being no wisdom, or understanding, or counsel, or power that can be of the least effect against him; that no one can ever harden himself against him and prosper, and that his enemies who will not submit to him, shall one time or other be forced by his terrible judgments to submit to him. Thus the *Psalmist* says, *How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee*, Psal. lxi. 3. and, v. 7. *He ruleth by his power for ever, his eyes behold the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves.*

The omnipotence of God, or his almighty power, sufficiently appears by his works; His *eternal power* and godhead may be understood by the things that are made; which they who truly fear him do seriously consider, and are from thence induced to retain in their hearts, and express in their conduct the highest reverence of him; They consider, that he who made the heavens and the earth,

SERM. and all things therein by his almighty power,

I. can by the same power strike offenders dead, and whenever he pleases, can execute his just judgments upon them for their sins. The power of God, as it appears in his works, is often in scripture urged as a sufficient argument to induce men to fear him. Thus, *Jer. v. 22.* Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my presence, who have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it, &c. And, *Psal. xcvi. 4, 5.* The Lord is great, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods: for all the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens. And again in that beautiful passage, *Psal. lxxxix. 6.—13.* Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O Lord, God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithful round about thee? thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm. The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine; as for the world, and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them; the north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy Name. Thou hast a mighty

mighty arm; strong is thy hand, and high SERM.
 is thy right-hand. Certainly so great, power- I.
 ful and almighty a being ought greatly to be
 feared; and they who truly fear him, do
 fear and reverence him, and have regard unto
 him, as such an one; agreeably to our Savi-
 our's exhortation to his disciples, *Mat. x. 28.*
Fear not them which kill the body, but are not
able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who
is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

2. They who truly fear the Lord, have
 their minds impressed with an awful sense of
 his omniscience, and regard him as a being
 who knows all things, is acquainted with all
 our ways, with all our words and actions,
 and sees into the most secret thoughts and
 designs of all hearts. God is every where
 present, all things are naked and bare before
 his eyes, with whom we have to do, and not
 the most secret thing can escape his know-
 ledge: He is as perfectly acquainted with us as
 we are with ourselves, and it is a most foolish
 and vain thing to think that even the most
 secret workings of our minds can be hid or
 concealed from him. All this is most ele-
 gantly and truly set forth in *Psal. cxxxix.*
1.—12. Lord, thou hast searched me, and
known me; thou knowest my down-sitting and
mine up-rising; thou understandest my thought
as far off; thou compassedst my path, and my ly-
ing down, and art acquainted with all my
ways. For there is not a word in my tongue,
but

SERM. *but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.*

I. *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid
 { thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too
 wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain
 unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
 or whither shall I flee from thy presence? if I
 ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I
 make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.
 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell
 in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there
 shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand
 shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness
 shall cover me; even the night shall be light
 about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from
 thee; but the night shineth as the day: the
 darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*
 Now, as such an omniscient, all-seeing and
 heart-searching God ought greatly to be
 feared, so they who truly fear him, do seri-
 ously regard him as such a one; they confi-
 der him as one who searches the hearts and
 tries the reins, even to give every one accord-
 ing to his works, and according to the fruit
 of his doings; that the darkest coverts, and
 the most secret retreats for the commission
 of sin, cannot escape his cognizance, and
 that there is no deceiving or mocking of
 him, no eluding his penetration, or imposing
 upon his all-seeing eye. These thoughts
 make a solid impression upon their spirits,
 and suitably affect their hearts.

3. They

3. They who truly fear God, do regard S E R M. I.
 him as the most holy being, as a being of the most perfect rectitude, who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on sin with the least allowance or approbation; but, on the contrary, has a most perfect hatred of sin, and bears the utmost, the most irreconcilable aversion to it. He is holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works; he is light, and in him is no darkness at all: He is righteous and loves righteousness, and no iniquity can ever dwell with him. *Who therefore shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name, for thou only art holy,* Rev. xv. 4. And as God is on this account likewise greatly to be feared, because he is such an holy being, so the true fear of him implies a regard to him as such an one.

4. His justice in punishing sinners, is another consideration, that impresses the minds of those that fear him, and makes them have an awe and reverence of him. They consider that he is, and will be just, in condemning the wicked, as well as faithful in rewarding the righteous; that as he is a holy being and hates sin and disorder, so he is a just being and will punish it: That as he always does what is just and fit and right, so, as it is just and fit that impenitent sinners should be punished, he will undoubtedly punish them. Hence they fear his threatenings

SERM. nings and his judgments, and stand in awe

I. of his Majesty. Indeed, if there was nothing but strict justice in the divine being, without any mixture of mercy, he would not be that amiable being as he certainly is : But there is a harmony in all the divine attributes ; his justice and his mercy are perfectly consistent : If it be fit for an all-wise being to shew mercy upon any one, he will shew mercy ; and if it be fit for him to punish, he will punish : We are sure, that as God is an all-wise being, he does not act arbitrarily, or by sovereign will and pleasure alone, without any reason : He undoubtedly acts according to the *highest* reason, and does nothing contrary to, or without reason ; though we cannot always pretend to see the reason of his proceedings, which will be fully manifested at last. But as we are endued with some degree of reason, so we are capable of judging of the reasonableness of many things ; and among the rest, we may be sure, that it is highly reasonable, that they who go on without repentance, in the wilful transgression of God's laws, or in acting unreasonably or wickedly, should be punished at last ; and so we may be sure they will be punished, as the word of God sufficiently declares in those many threatnings of misery and eternal destruction to wilful and impenitent sinners. Now, this being the case, God
being

a fundamental Duty.

II

being thus just in punishing sin, the fear of him must imply our duly and seriously regarding him as such an one. SERM.
I.

5. As the true fear of God, which his servants are possessed of, is not a slavish fear, but an ingenuous, free, rational, and filial fear, so it must include the considering him as a *perfectly good* being, from whom they receive all the good they enjoy, and from whose hand must come all the good things they hope for: If he was only almighty, omniscient, and the like, he might be the object of our dread; but as he is at the same time good, and kind and merciful, the consideration of this, joined with his other attributes, must render him the object of a truly ingenuous fear. This is sufficiently intimated in many places of scripture, as *Jer. v. 24. Neither say they in their hearts; let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter in his season; he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.* Here you see the good providence of God in taking care of his creatures, is supposed to be a proper ground of fearing him, *i. e.* having a reverential and grateful regard to him. And in *Psal. cxxx. 4.* his goodness in pardoning the sins of the sincerely penitent is made to be the main ground of this truly religious fear of him: *But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared.* If God was an inexorable being

SERM. being, who refused to pardon the sins of

I. those who sincerely desire to repent of them
 and forsake them, we might be filled with
 perpetual horror and terror, but could not
 have an ingenuous and truly laudable fear of
 him; this nothing but the consideration of
 his goodness, joined with his other perfections,
 can create in us. And where there is such a
 fear and reverence arising from the conside-
 ration of his goodness, persons will be ex-
 ceeding cautious of offending him, and most
 desirous and studious to please him, least
 they should prove ungrateful to their best
 friend and benefactor, and should expose
 themselves unless they repent, to his more
 severe displeasure, and a heavier condemna-
 tion, for abusing and slighting his exceeding
 great grace and goodness.

But, 2dly, As a sense of the divine per-
 fections, so a sense of the relation that there
 is between God and us, does also impress
 the minds of those who truly fear and reve-
 rence him. Thus they consider him, as
 their great creator, and themselves as his
 creatures, who receive their being from him,
 and in him continually *live and move and*
have their being. They reverence him as the
 author and first cause of all things, who has
 fearfully and wonderfully made us all, and
 is the God of the spirits of all flesh. Again,
 they consider him as their constant preserver
 who upholds our souls in life, supports them
 and

and sustains them by his good providence, SERM.
 and by his influence, continues them in be- I.
 ing. They also consider him as the great
 orderer and disposer of all things, who can
 do with them, and for them, as it seemeth
 good in his sight: And as their supreme
 and rightful governor and lawgiver, who has
 the most just and rightful authority over
 them, and is able to save or to destroy, ac-
 cording as they obey or disobey his equita-
 ble laws. Hence they tremble at his word,
 and stand in awe of it, as the Psalmist did,
*Psal. cxix. 161. My heart standeth in awe of
 thy word.* Finally, they consider him as
 their great and almighty and impartial judge,
 who will righteously dispense rewards to the
 good, and punishments to the bad, and who
 has all power to bring men before his im-
 partial tribunal, and to execute upon them
 whatever his just judgment shall determine.
 The Apostle *Peter* exhorts the christians to
 fear from this very consideration, *1 Ep. i. 17.*
*And if ye call on the Father, who without re-
 spect of persons judgeth according to every
 man's work, pass the time of your sojourning
 here in fear.* Now such considerations as
 these do prevail in the minds of all those
 who truly fear God: They regard him and
 reverence him as almighty, as all-knowing,
 as most holy, just and good; and as their
 creator, preserver, governor, lawgiver and
 judge. They not only know and are con-
 vinced

SERM. vinced that these glorious perfections belong

I. to God, and that he is thus related to them;
 but they so seriously consider these things,
 as that they make deep and lasting impres-
 sions on their minds, whereby they gain a
 fixed and habitual reverence of God in their
 hearts, which prevails over all other confi-
 derations, and duly influences their conduct.

This then is *the fear of the Lord*, which
 is as a fountain of life to depart from the snares
 of death. Which happy advantages of this
 principle, I shall consider in my next dis-
 course.

SER-

SERMON II.

The Fear of GOD, a fundamental
Duty.

PROV. xiv. 27.

X *The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to
depart from the snares of death.*

IN treating on these words, I proposed, SERM.
II.

I. To consider and explain the fear of {
the Lord.

II. To shew the benefit, advantage, and
necessity of this principle, in its being a
*fountain of life to depart from the snares of
death.*

The first of these was the subject
of my former discourse; in which I ob-
served, that by the fear of the Lord, we
are sometimes to understand religion, virtue,
and righteousness, as flowing from thence.
Thus the Psalmist says, *Come ye children,
hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of
the Lord,* and shews, in the following words,
that

SERM. that this fear of the Lord was to depart from

II. evil and do good, &c. But I chose to treat
here of the principle itself, or the fear of
the Lord as seated in the heart, from whence
the practice of righteousness does proceed.
This fear of God, is an awful and reveren-
tial respect and regard to him, according to
his most excellent nature and glorious per-
fections, and the relations he stands in to us.
It is a fixed, a habitual reverence of him, as
the first supreme, self-existent, independent,
and eternal being, and as possessing all possible
perfections, some of these perfections which
render God the object of our religious fear and
reverence, I insisted more particularly upon ;
and shewed, that they who truly fear him,
do consider and regard him as an omnipotent
almighty being, who has all power in him-
self, and can do whatsoever he pleases ; as
an omniscient being, who knows all things,
is acquainted with all our ways, with all our
words and actions, and with the most se-
cret thoughts and designs of our hearts ; who
being every way present, has all things naked
and open before him, and nothing hid from
him ; as is most beautifully declared, *Psal.*
cxxxix. beginning. Again, they fear and reve-
rence him, as a most holy, just and righteous
being, as a being of perfect rectitude, who
hates all sin, vice and disorder, and will as-
suredly punish it, as he has most justly
threatned ; as he loves righteousness, and
will

will assuredly reward it according to his gracious promises. And so they who fear God regard him also as a Being perfectly good, with whom there is forgiveness that he may be feared; and the consideration of this, with the other perfections, creates in them not a servile fear, dread, and horror, but an ingenuous filial fear and reverence, which fills their minds with the most agreeable sensations, and sweetly inclines and attracts them to the practice of virtue and righteousness. SERM. II.

I then mentioned some of those relations between God and us, which those who truly fear him, are possessed with a due and lively sense of, and fear him upon those considerations; such as his being our great Creator from whom we receive our being, our kind and constant preserver by whom we are continued in existence; our supreme and rightful governor and lawgiver; and our just and impartial judge. They who truly fear God, do not only know that he is possessed of these perfections, and stands in these relations to us; but are impressed with a strong and lively sense thereof: They so seriously consider these things that they make deep and lasting impressions upon their minds, whereby they gain a fixed and habitual principle of the fear of God in their hearts, which prevails over all other considerations, and duly influences their conduct.

SERM. In this manner I more largely considered

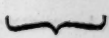
II. and explained this principle, the fear of the
 Lord ; and come now,

2dly, To treat of the unspeakable benefit, and advantage, and indeed, necessity of it, from what is said of it in our text ; *it is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*

The plain sense of which words is in general this, that the fear of the Lord is the source, original, or cause of those things, or leads to the practice of those things which tend to life, and preserves from those things which tend to death.

And, 1st, Let us consider how the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, or leads to those things which tend to life. This it must do ; inasmuch as where this principle is in truth and sincerity, it inspires men with an ardent desire, and puts them upon diligently endeavouring to do those things that please that most excellent and glorious being whom they fear, in order to their being approved and accepted of him ; and as they know that they cannot be approved of God without the practice of righteousness and true goodness, they will take care to practice those in sincerity, or to keep God's commandments wherein righteousness and virtue are enjoined. Hence these things are frequently in scripture joined with the fear of God, to shew that they proceed from it, or

are the genuine effects of it ; as *Ecclef. xii.* SERM.

13. *Fear God and keep his commandments,* II.
for this is the whole duty of man. And *Acts* 

x. 35. *He that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.* But more particularly, that the fear of the Lord tendeth to life, or leads to those things, which tend to life, appears,

1. In that it will put men upon acting according to reason, and the dignity of their nature, which they have received from God: He that fears God does not look upon himself to be his own, but to be his Creator's who, he is sensible, has a just propriety in him, and right over him ; and as he knows he received all his powers and faculties from him, and depends continually on him for the continuance of them, and that he is accountable to his great Creator for the use or abuse of them, he will take care to use them to the ends for which they were given, and to glorify God in his body, and in his spirit, which are his, in the sincere practice of righteousness and piety, presenting his body unto him a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to him, and yielding his members instruments of righteousness unto holiness. The wicked are represented, *Psal. xii. 4.* as saying, *With our tongue will we prevail, our lips are our own, who is Lord over us? These have no fear of God before their eyes :* But on the other hand, the righteous who fear God, look up-

SERM. on their body and spirit and tongue, and all
 II. their members, powers and faculties not to
 be their own, so as to use them as they
 list, but to be the Lord's, their great maker
 and preserver, to be used for the ends for
 which he gave them, *viz.* in conformity to
 the rules of righteousness, piety, charity, and
 temperance, which he has prescribed.

2. The true fear of God will put men
 upon acting right in every condition and re-
 lation that they are placed in by providence.
 He who fears God, regards his providence,
 and considers him as the great governor of
 the world, as the supreme orderer of his
 creatures, and as the wise disposer of all
 events; and whilst he is thus persuaded,
 and is duly sensible hereof he will acknow-
 ledge God's hand in every station of life
 he passes through, and will be disposed to
 behave himself agreeably to it, or to dis-
 charge the duties that such a station requires.
 He will look upon himself as made by God
 a member of the great body of mankind;
 and as such will endeavour to do justly, and
 in his station to be a good member of socie-
 ty. He will look upon the relations he may
 sustain of husband, father, son and brother,
 master or servant, and the like, to be the
 effect of that wise constitution of things,
 which God has settled; and so will endea-
 vour, in obedience to his Creator whom he
 fears, to discharge the duties of those sever-

a fundamental Duty.

21

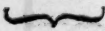
ral relations. If he be in adversity, he will be contented and humble himself under the mighty hand of God; and if he enjoys prosperity, he will be thankful to God for it, and will have such a sense of the duties of that station, that he will honour the Lord with his substance, and will be rich in good works towards them that are in want, considering, that *He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his maker; but he that honoureth his maker, hath mercy on the poor*; as v. 31 of this chapter, where our text is.

SERM.
II.

3. The true fear of God will put men upon enquiring after every signification of his will, and yielding obedience to it. Thus it will make them reverence the word of God, which contains the revelation of his will; it will dispose and incline them to study this word, that they may know what God requires of them; to practice real religion and virtue in all its parts, which that word enjoins; and to make use of all those means that are therein prescribed for keeping up and increasing the life of religion in them; thus they will conscientiously worship God publickly and privately, and by that means will be more and more disposed and inclined to every other part of their duty.

Now by these means is the *fear of the Lord a fountain of life*; as it puts us upon
C 3 acting

SERM. acting according to the dignity of our na-

II.  ture, the conditions and relations we are placed in, and the precepts of the divine word; for if we thus act, we shall act righteously; and *in the way of righteousness is life, and in the path-way thereof there is no death*, Prov. xii. 28. Now this life, which the fear of God tends to, by leading us in the way of righteousness, may be considered in three respects.

1. It tends to health and life in a proper sense here. Not that the most righteous can expect to live for ever here, or that every righteous man shall out-live every wicked man: We are not thus to strain this matter; but the meaning is, that a virtuous conduct, which is the effect of the fear of God, has a natural tendency *to secure our health and life, so long as it shall please God to continue them unto us*, in that it secures us from many things which tend to hurt our health, and to shorten our days; as will be more fully considered when we come to speak of *the snares of death*. *A sound heart*, says Solomon, *is the life of the flesh*, v. 30. of the chapter, where our text is: And again, *ch. x. 27. The fear of the Lord prolongeth days*.

2. The fear of the Lord undoubtedly tends to life in a moral or spiritual sense: For the work of righteousness, which it leads to, is peace, and causes the greatest comfort and joy in our minds, the greatest serenity and

and satisfaction. They who truly fear God SERM. may hope in him and trust in him; and II. hope and trust in God, will cause the most desirable calmness of mind even in outward troubles, and will make us rejoice even in tribulations. Though the righteous who fear God cannot live for ever, yet they have hope in their death. For,

3. The fear of God tends to life eternal in the world to come, which is fully revealed in the gospel of Christ. True piety and righteousness the effect of the fear of God, naturally tends to peace and happiness, supposing a future state: *To be spiritually minded is life and peace.* And this future state is plainly discovered and repeatedly promised in the gospel, which is declared to be an everlasting state. *To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality,* as they who truly fear God do, he will graciously give eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thus have we considered the fear of the Lord, as it is a fountain of life; which will more fully appear if we consider,

2dly, How it preserves from the snares of death. *The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*

The snares of death are sin and vice, impiety, injustice and intemperance, or whatever leads to them. These bring men,

SERM.

I. To death in a proper sense oftentimes

II. in this life, either inflicted by the civil magistrate, who for the good of the community is appointed of God to be *a terror to evil doers*, or occasioned in a natural way, as diseases and death are the natural consequences of some vices. Of both these, we have too many sad instances. How many do we see, that by the practice of vice bring themselves to an untimely violent death by the hand of publick justice? And how many are there that, by intemperance and excess of various kinds, bring incurable diseases and death upon themselves? Of the former kind we may suppose the Psalmist to speak, *Psal. lv. 23. Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.* And of both kinds we may understand the words of the wise man in that forecited *Prov. x. 27. The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.*

2. Sin and vice always occasion death in a moral sense; whence persons immersed in vice are said to *be dead in trespasses and sins*. And when our Saviour says, *Let the dead bury their dead*, he means, 'let those who are morally or spiritually dead, bury their friends who are naturally dead. By this death, in a moral sense, I understand either that stupidity, senselessness and sunk state, or that trouble, anguish, guilt, fear and confusion of mind, which are occasioned by sin and vice: Thus
the

the wicked have either *their consciences seared*, S E R M. as it were, *with a hot iron*, or *are like the troubled sea*, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, and there is no peace unto them. II.

3. Sin and vice will certainly bring upon men the second death in the world to come. They naturally tend to unhappiness and misery, supposing a future state; *to be carnally minded is death*: And this future state of the wicked is plainly threatened in the gospel, wherein we are assured, that *the wicked shall perish*, and that *they shall be punished with everlasting destruction*, and that *they who live after the flesh shall die*.

Thus have we considered how sin and vice are the snares of death; and come now,

2. To consider how the fear of the Lord tends to preserve men from them.

1. It does this, inasmuch as it is a constant check upon our passions and appetites. These, though good in themselves when under the conduct of reason, and given us for wise ends, and suited to our present state, yet must be acknowledged to be the source of all the disorders that are in the moral world, when they are either placed upon undue objects, or run out into excess; both which are most likely to be prevented by the true fear of God, for that will make us consider ourselves so under the government and authority of the Almighty, as that we shall

SERM. shall be justly afraid of indulging our appetites and passions in those instances which he
 II. has forbidden, or to any excess which is in itself unlawful.

2. The fear of God tends to preserve us from those temptations which arise from the different states of prosperity and adversity. The temptations arising from these are very great ; which *Agur* was so sensible of, that he prayed against them both, *Prov. xxx. 8, 9.—Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me ; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord ? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.* And *Solomon* says, *The prosperity of fools shall destroy them,* *Prov. i.*

32. The rich are apt to be proud, and covetous, and sensual, and oppressive ; and the poor are exposed to many temptations ; but the true fear of the Lord will preserve them both from those follies, irregularities and vices that are so incident to their different states : So that the rich man who fears God will be humble, and temperate, and charitable, considering himself only as a steward intrusted with a talent which he must give an account of to his great Lord and Master. And the poor man who fears God will be patient, and contented, and resigned to the will of God, and will take care to avoid those irregularities which those of his station are so exceedingly prone to.

3. The

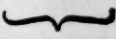
3. The fear of the Lord will preserve men SERM.
 from the ill effects of bad company, and II.
 from the evil advice and solicitations of wicked men. He who truly fears God will avoid bad company as much as possible, knowing of what a pernicious nature it is; and will be rather a companion of all them that fear the Lord, as *David* says he was, *Psal.* cxix. 63. *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.* And if he should happen, thro' necessity, or otherwise, to be cast among bad company, the true fear of God will be a sovereign preservative from the bad effects of their example, their advice or solicitations. Such an one will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, and if sinners entice him, he will not consent; according to *Solomon's* advice, *Prov.* i. 10.—15. *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: Let us swallow them up alive as the grave, and whole as those that go down into the pit: We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: Cast in thy lot among us, let us all have one purse. My son, walk not thou in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path.* And as to wicked solicitations, see how *Joseph*, by means of the fear of God, was enabled to resist them, when he said to his mistress,

tress,

SERM. trefs, *How can I do this great wickedness, and*
 II. *sin against God?* Gen. xxxix. 9.

4. To this we may add, that the fear of God preserves from the temptations that arise from custom and general practice, or from fashionable vices. If we could suppose any one vice to obtain as a fashion or custom all the world over, he who fears God, being sensible it is a vice, would in that instance dare to be entirely singular. Great numbers of examples are apt to have great influence; but he who truly fears God will not follow a multitude to do evil. When *Nehemiah* had the example of all the governors that went before him, who enriched themselves by oppressing the people, he said, *But this did not I, because of the fear of God,* Neh. v. 15.

5. The fear of the Lord preserves from the temptations that arise from the fear of men. *The fear of man, says Solomon, bringeth a snare,* Prov. xxix. 25. But from this snare does the fear of God secure us: So that if our hearts are truly possessed of this fear, neither the desires, nor commands, nor threats of our superiors will be of any weight with us, if they be contrary to the commands of God: We shall rather chuse to displease all men than to displease him; yea we shall chuse rather to suffer any thing from men than to offend or sin against God; according to our Saviour's command, *Fear not them*
who

who kill the body, but are not able to kill the SERM.
soul; but rather fear him who is able to de- II.
stroy both soul and body in hell, Matt. x. 28. 

And St. Peter's 1st Ep. iii. 14, 15.—*Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.* Thus have we seen how the fear of the Lord preserves from the snares of death, by preserving us from the temptations that arise from our own passions and appetites, from the different states of prosperity and adversity, from the example, advice and sollicitations of wicked men, from custom and general practice, and from the fear of men. And that it thus preserves from sin itself, is implied in several places of scripture, where the avoiding sin is represented as the effect of it; as *Psal. iv. 4. Stand in awe, and sin not.* *Prov. iii. 7. Fear the Lord, and depart from evil.* And, *chap. xvi. 6.* it is expressly said, that by *the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.*

Having thus seen the excellency of this principle, and how necessary and effectual it is to preserve us from sin and death, and to lead us to righteousness and life, I shall conclude, by earnestly exhorting you to cultivate this principle in yourselves and others. If you have been careless and superficial in this matter, it is high time now to attend to those considerations that may give you a settled and habitual reverence for your
 great

SERM. great Creator ; for on this depends your true

II. comfort here, and happiness hereafter. And
if you have attained to this happy frame of mind, and your hearts are possessed with this salutary principle, do you labour to improve it and preserve it. To this end often meditate on the divine power, sovereignty, justice and goodness, and on the relation you stand in to the divine Being, as your creator, your preserver, your rightful Lord and governor, and your judge and final rewarder, that so you may stand in awe of him and sin not. Will you not be afraid to offend an all-powerful, all-knowing, holy and just God; yea will you not have a generous fear of offending him who is the chief good, and who has manifested his goodness to you in various and even innumerable instances, and particularly in the redemption wrought out for you by Jesus Christ. And as you should labour to cultivate this most excellent principle of the fear of God in yourselves, so you should labour to implant it and improve it in others, as you should seek the good and welfare of others as well as your own. Particularly, labour to instil this principle in your children, or any that you are immediately concerned for. Would you have your children be preserved from the temptations of an evil world, endeavour then betimes to teach them the fear of the Lord, and that will preserve them. Would you have them enjoy comfort in their
minds

a fundamental Duty.

31

minds here, and eternal happiness hereafter, SERM.
then labour to possess their minds with the II.
fear of God, that they may remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and may fear to sin against him. This in all likelihood will be a solid and abiding principle of virtue in them, and will preserve them from the dangerous and destructive paths of vice; when matters of mere speculation and doubtful disputation in religion will serve for little else than to confound them; but the true fear of God is a solid and rational thing, and will be to all who are possessed of it, *a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*

SER-

S E R M O N I I I .

The Love of G O D insured by Righteousness.

P S A L . c x l v i . 8 . l a t . p a r t .

The L O R D loveth the righteous.

S E R M .
I I I .

ALL men are naturally desirous of happiness, and thereupon are constantly seeking after it, and labouring to have it in their possession, and pursuing those methods for the obtaining of it, which, according to the notions they have of it, seem likely to bring them to the enjoyment of it ; but the misery of it is, that a great part of mankind have entertained wrong notions of felicity, and consequently take the wrong way to attain to so desirable a possession, and so delude and deceive themselves, and instead of true felicity, gain only real misery in the end. They place happiness in the gratification of their passions, in sensual delights and pleasures, in riches or honours, or carnal, and even sinful enjoyments, and hence their whole time and study are employed in contriving

triving how to get these things into their possession, which are so far from yielding true happiness, that they are frequently and most commonly attended with, or followed by pain and anxiety, and uneasiness of mind; or however, the enjoyment of them being uncertain, and at best but short, they must needs be far from conferring true and perfect felicity. Whatever any one chiefly, and above all other things, desires the enjoyment of, in that he places his happiness; which if it be any earthly object, it will miserably deceive him, and come vastly short of affording him real felicity. Where then shall we rest? where shall we find such perfect and constant satisfaction and tranquillity of mind, as constitutes true happiness? Truly no where, but in our Creator himself. It is only God that can fill our minds with real and substantial joy and pleasure and satisfaction, and in whom we can thoroughly acquiesce; and consequently, it is he alone, that can make us truly happy. All pleasures and enjoyments short of him, are but so many transitory delusions and vain appearances of felicity, which, if we chuse not God for our supreme happiness, will in the end, but leave us so much more miserable, uneasy and unsatisfied. Whatever mistaken notions many have entertained, who are guided by the heat of their passions, and not by reason; true happiness is

SERM. no where to be found but in God himself,
 III. and that in the enjoyment of his love and
 ~~~~~ favour and blessing, and the like; hence  
 the Psalmist tells us, *In favour is life*, Psal.  
 xxx. 5. And again, *his loving-kindness is  
 better than life*, Psal. lxxiii. 3. and he fre-  
 quently extols the happiness and blessedness  
 of them whose hope is in the Lord, whose  
 expectation is from him, and who have him  
 for their God. Thus in this Psalm, after  
 having resolved to praise God as long as he  
 lived, and having exposed the vanity of  
 trusting in man, and expecting help or suc-  
 cour from any thing short of the divine fa-  
 vour, he breaks out into exultation at the  
 happiness of those who make God their  
 trust, ver. 5. *Happy is he that hath the God  
 of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in  
 the Lord his God*; and he enlarges on this  
 happiness, from the consideration of God's  
 power and works, his faithfulness and truth,  
 and his mercy, shewed to men in their va-  
 rious afflictions, ver. 6, 7, 8. *Which made  
 heaven and earth, the sea and all therein is:  
 which keepeth truth for ever, which executeth  
 judgment for the oppressed, which giveth food  
 to the hungry: The Lord looseth the prisoners,  
 the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind, the Lord  
 raiseth them that are bowed down*; and ver. 9.  
*The Lord preserveth the strangers, he relieveth  
 the fatherless and widow*. Certainly he must  
 be happy, who has this God, so powerful,  
 I and

and righteous, and merciful a being for his S E R M.  
 portion. Now, as true happiness is no III.  
 where to be had but in God, in his love  
 and favour, so the only way to obtain this  
 felicity is by being righteous, by sincerely  
 addicting ourselves to the practice of righte-  
 ousness and holiness, which alone is well  
 pleasing to God : And therefore, as the hap-  
 piness of those whom God loves and favours  
 is frequently extolled in scripture, so it is the  
 righteous who are ever said to enjoy this blef-  
 sedness. And thus in our text, that we might  
 know who are those truly happy persons who  
 are interested in the divine love and favour,  
 the Psalmist adds, *The Lord loveth the righte-  
 ous.* 'Tis the righteous who possess this  
 happiness.

Now, in treating on these words, I shall,

- I. Consider who are those righteous per-  
 sons whom the Lord, Jehovah, is said  
 to love.
- II. What we are to understand by his lov-  
 ing them, or what this expression in-  
 cludes.
- III. How it appears that *the Lord* thus  
*loveth the righteous.*

I. Who are those righteous persons whom  
 the Lord loveth ?

Now, it is certain that none are perfectly  
 righteous, for we are all sinners in some de-

SERM. gree or other, in some instance or other, *w*  
 III. *have all sinned*, as the Apostle says, *and come*  
 short of the glory of God; and in this sense  
 the wise man's observation holds good, *Eccl.*  
*vii. 20. There is not a just man upon earth,*  
*who doeth good, and sinneth not.* By the righ-  
 teous therefore we are to understand, such  
 whose disposition is agreeable to the will of  
 God, and the general course and tenour of  
 whose actions is conformable thereunto, who  
 will and desire that which is well pleasing  
 to God, and sincerely endeavour to practise  
 accordingly; it is necessary that our minds  
 be rightly disposed for holiness, and that we  
 have a sincere love to, and desire after righ-  
 teousness for its own excellency, and because  
 well pleasing to God, if we would practise  
 it as we ought, *viz.* sincerely, and would  
 obtain the character of righteous persons;  
 for in all our actions God chiefly regards the  
 inward springs and motives of them; if  
 therefore, from a right temper and disposi-  
 tion of mind we endeavour to obey his com-  
 mandments, to live as he would have us, and  
 to follow after holiness and righteousness, if  
 we make his law the rule of our lives, and  
 sincerely endeavour to conform ourselves there-  
 to in every respect, (for 'tis necessary we should  
 endeavour to obey all God's commandments)  
 we are the righteous persons meant in the text,  
 whom God loves. But more particularly,  
 that we may know who are righteous, we  
 may

may consider righteousness with respect to SERM.  
the rule of it, and to the objects of it. The III.

rule of righteousness is in general the law of God, which law is expressed by the light of nature, and in divine revelation. 1. Those who are righteous, endeavour to conform themselves to the light of nature, to those natural notices they have, or may have, of virtue, and righteousness, and goodness, by the reflection of their own minds, and the use of the reason that God has endued them with, by the consideration of the several relations they stand in, and what is agreeable thereto. Thus many among the heathen, who had only the light of nature, and were under no other law than the law of their reason, many, I say, among these, sincerely endeavoured to live according to this law of their nature, tho' they had no positive revelation from God; tho' they had not *the law*, *they did by nature the things contained in the law*, and *were a law unto themselves*: And such as these are to be looked upon as righteous persons whom God loveth; for as the apostle *Peter* says, *In every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness*, (which he that sincerely endeavours to live according to the law of nature does) *is accepted with him*, Acts x. 35. 2. The divine revelation is another rule of righteousness to those that have it, and they are righteous who sincerely endeavour to live agreeably thereto. There



SERM. are two revelations which God gave to men,  
 III. one to a particular nation, or body of men,  
 as the law of *Moses*, or the old testament to  
 the *Jews*, and the other promiscuously to all  
 men, as the gospel, or new testament; and  
 those were said to be righteous among the  
*Jews*, or under the old testament, who con-  
 formed to the law of *Moses*, and to those  
 particular directions which God gave them  
 from time to time by his prophets, who  
 obeyed not only the precepts of morality con-  
 tained in their law, but also the positive pre-  
 cepts thereof: Thus *Zechariah* and *Eliza-  
 beth* are said to be *both righteous before God,*  
*walking in all the commandments and ordinan-*  
*ces of the law blameless*, Luke i. 6. And  
 those God accounts righteous under the gos-  
 pel, who, believing in his Son Jesus Christ,  
 submit themselves to his authority, and sin-  
 cerely comply with the precepts of the gos-  
 pel. Who are conformed to the new crea-  
 tion, *in righteousness and true holiness*; who  
 keep the commandments of God, and have  
*that faith which worketh by love*; who not  
 only obey the precepts of morality contained  
 in the gospel, but conform to the positive com-  
 mands thereof, and so endeavour to *fulfil all*  
*righteousness*. 3. We may consider righ-  
 teousness with regard to the objects on which  
 it is exercised. The word *Righteousness* is used  
 sometimes in a strict sense, to denote justice  
 and equity between man and man, and those

are said to be just and righteous who give SERM.  
 every one his due : But here, by the righte- III.  
 ous, we are to understand those who sincere-  
 ly obey all God's commandments, with re-  
 spect either to God immediately, ourselves,  
 or our neighbour. 1<sup>st</sup>, Those who are right-  
 teous, sincerely perform the duties that re-  
 spect God immediately, or have due regard  
 to his worship and immediate service. Right-  
 teous persons are religious persons ; they  
 maintain piety, and live a godly life ; they  
 love God with all their heart, and soul, and  
 mind ; they trust in him, and they fear  
 him, and reverence his name and authority ;  
 they pay all homage and adoration to him,  
 and ascribe to him all possible perfections ;  
 they pray constantly to him ; they praise and  
 magnify his name, and in every thing give  
 thanks unto him ; they *worship him in spirit  
 and in truth*, and serve him with reverence  
 and godly fear ; they worship him privately  
 and publickly, and still give glory to his  
 name ; they sincerely endeavour to obey his  
 commandments, and direct all their actions  
 to his glory. 2<sup>dly</sup>, Those who are righte-  
 ous, have always a due regard to the govern-  
 ment of themselves ; they observe what is a-  
 greeable to the dignity of their nature, and  
 to the will of God ; in this respect they live  
 soberly in the world ; they keep all their  
 passions and appetites within due bounds ;  
 they maintain temperance and moderation in  
 D 4 the

SERM. the use of all worldly enjoyments; they are

III. humble, and modest, and patient, and contented; they avoid all excess, all unlawful gratifications, and manage themselves in all respects with holiness and sobriety. *3dly*, Those who are righteous, conscientiously observe the duties they owe to their neighbour, or to all men; they render to every one his due, they give every one his own, and are just and equitable in all their dealings; they wrong none, defraud none, oppress none, but do to others as they would be dealt with themselves; and they are not only just and honest in their dealings, but they sincerely love all men; they love their neighbour as themselves, they desire his welfare, and endeavour by all means to promote it; they maintain charity for all men, and are ready on all occasions to do them good; they are merciful, and kind, and compassionate, and beneficent, ready, according to their ability, to administer suitable helps to every one. Thus charity and beneficence is sometimes called righteousness, as, 2 Cor. ix. 9. *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness remaineth for ever, i. e. his bounty, liberality and munificence: So, ver. 10. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower, doth minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness, i. e. of your liberality.* Thus we see who are the righteous, *viz. those*

those who sincerely endeavour to obey all SERM.  
 God's commandments, and to perform the III.  
 duties they owe to him, themselves and their  
 neighbour ; and these, either such as have  
 made this the constant practice of their lives,  
 or such as after a course of sin have sincerely  
 repented and turned to God, and so bring  
 forth these fruits meet for repentance ; both  
 these come under the denomination of righteous  
 persons, and are such as God loves.  
 Both indeed are but imperfectly righteous,  
 but their sincerity, tho' imperfect, is graciously  
 accepted thro' Jesus Christ ; so that they are  
 treated as if they were perfectly righteous.

II. I come now in the second place, to consider what we are to understand by God's loving the righteous, or what is included in it.

1. Hereby we are to understand, that God approves, accepts of, and is well pleased with the righteous. Righteousness is what he approves, and is agreeable to his will, consequently he must like and approve of those who make it the practice of their lives ; as the practice is acceptable and well pleasing to him, so those who maintain it must necessarily be so too ; *Rom. xiv. 17, 18. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost : for he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God.* The righteous  
 have



SERM. have the divine acceptance and approbation ;

III. God respects them, and likes them, and takes delight and complacency in them, *Prov. xi. 20. Such as are upright in their way are his delight* : He esteems them, and accounts them precious in his sight ; he justifies them, and pardons their sins, and remits all their transgressions : The divine approbation supposes the pardon and remission of sins ; the most righteous have need of this blessing, as having been guilty of sin in some respect or other, and being still liable to be overtaken in a fault ; and God fails not to grant this favour through Jesus Christ to every sincere penitent, who makes righteousness the main scope and design of his life. Thus, when *David* had declared the blessedness of him *whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered, and to whom the Lord will not impute iniquity*, that we might know who is partaker of this blessing of remission of sins, he adds, *and in whose spirit there is no guile*, (no deceit or wickedness) 'tis such a person that has his sins forgiven, *Psal. xxxii. 1, 2.* The divine approbation and acceptance of the righteous, includes also the approbation and acceptance of all their religious services. *The wicked are an abomination to the Lord* when they tread his courts, but the sincere worship of the righteous is grateful and acceptable to him ; he is well pleased with their praise and thanksgivings,  
and

and graciously hears and answers their prayers and supplications, 1 Pet. iii. 12. *The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.* Prov. xv. 8. *The prayer of the upright is his delight.* SERM.  
III.

2dly, The love of God to the righteous, supposes that he favours and blesteth them, and does them good in every respect in this life; that he takes care of them; that he watches over them for good; that his kind providence attends them, and is engaged for them, and presides over all their affairs, to order them for the best. The care that God takes over the righteous is variously expressed in scripture. Thus, he *preserveth them, defendeth and keepeth them in all their ways, he is their shield, and their fortress, and their high tower; his name is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.* Psal. xxxvii. 28. *The Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever.* Psal. cxlv. 20. *The Lord preserveth all them that love him.* Prov. ii. 7, 8. *He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly: he keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.* So also he delivers them when they are in trouble and adversity, he rescues them from evil, and sets them at liberty from their affliction; this is expressed, Psal. xxxiv. 17. *The righteous cry, and the Lord beareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.* And, ver. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth*

SERM. *vereth them out of them all. And, Psal xxxvii.*

III. 39, 40. *The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their strength in time of trouble, and the Lord shall help them, and deliver them; he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him. He also provides for them, and supplies all their wants, he suffers not the righteous to want any good thing; Prov. x. 3. The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish. And, chap. xiii. 25. The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul. And tho' many that are righteous may have less worldly substance than the wicked, yet they enjoy the blessing of God with it; and so a little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked. God also supports and strengthens the righteous under all their infirmities; Psal. xxxvii. 24. Tho' he (i. e. a good man) fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. And finally, he guides and directs them in all their ways, he layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous, as the wise Man says; and as the Psalmist says, The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Thus God favours and does good to the righteous in every respect; and his blessing and favour is manifested to them, not only in prosperity, but even in the midst of afflictions and adversity; when he chastiseth them, and suffers trouble to come upon them, he does it out of love, and with a design to do them good;*

good ; and accordingly he maketh their afflictions, as well as every thing else, to work together for their good, for their real profit and advantage. *Rom. viii. 28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose.* But, SERM.  
III.

3. The love of God to the righteous, supposes a future reward of happiness and glory in the world to come to be conferred on them. This was indeed but obscurely hinted under the old testament, but in the gospel it is most clearly revealed, Jesus Christ having brought life and immortality to light. We are herein told of a glorious reward of eternal life and happiness to be given to the righteous, that they shall rise again to a blessed immortality, and enjoy eternal glory, honour and peace in heaven ; that their natures shall be rectified, and perfectly restored ; and that they shall have every thing that is good, excellent and desirable to enjoy, and that for ever ; and finally, that they shall be eternally happy, and blessed in the enjoyment of the divine presence, in which *is fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.* Thus we see what is included in this expression, *The Lord loveth the righteous*, viz. that he approves, esteems, and is well pleased with them ; that he delights in them, and justifies, and pardons, and accepts them ; that he bleseth them, and taketh care of them in this life, and



SERM. and maketh all things to work together for  
 III. their good ; and that he will confer on them  
 eternal happiness and glory in the world to  
 come ; and finally, give them the perpetual  
 enjoyment of himself; beyond which no-  
 thing can be desired or expected.

III. I come now in the third place, to  
 consider how it appears that *the Lord loveth  
 the righteous.*

1. This is plain from the nature of things ;  
 God loveth righteousness, and therefore lo-  
 veth the righteous. Righteousness is entire-  
 ly agreeable to the nature of God, he is per-  
 fectly holy and righteous, and there is no  
 unrighteousness in him ; he *is righteous in all  
 his ways, and holy in all his works*, and there-  
 fore righteousness, wherever it is found, must  
 needs be grateful and well pleasing to him,  
 and consequently he must love, and esteem,  
 and delight to bless and reward them who  
 sincerely maintain it : *The righteous Lord lo-  
 veth righteousness*, and therefore *his counte-  
 nance does behold the upright* ; and then, if  
 we consider that righteousness is a conformi-  
 ty to the law of God, he must certainly be  
 pleased with those who sincerely obey his  
 law.

2. It appears that God loveth the righte-  
 ous, from several and almost innumerable  
 declarations of holy scripture, of his love,  
 and favour, and good-will towards such.  
 The holy scriptures are the word of truth,  
 the

the word of God himself, and therefore we SERM-  
 may depend on what is therein asserted as to III.  
 this matter. The several passages I have  
 already quoted concerning God's preserving,  
 delivering, upholding and blessing the right-  
 eous, are so many testimonies of his love to  
 them; but I shall cite two or three more:  
*Gen. xviii.* latter end, *Abraham* is interced-  
 ing with God for *Sodom*, and God, in an-  
 swer to his queries, tells him first, *that if*  
*there were fifty righteous persons in Sodom, he*  
*would spare all the place for their sakes;* and  
 then, *if there were but forty-five, and so*  
*down to ten, he would not destroy it for their*  
*sake;* which shews what a wonderful regard  
 God has for the righteous. *Job xxxvi. 7.*  
*it is said, He (i. e. God) withdraweth not his*  
*eyes from the righteous* *Psal. i. 6. The Lord*  
*knoweth (i. e. approveth) the way of the*  
*righteous.* *Psal. v. 12. For thou, Lord, wilt*  
*bless the righteous, with favour wilt thou com-*  
*pass him as with a shield.* *Isa. iii. 10. Say ye*  
*to the righteous, that it shall be well with him.*  
*Rom. ii. 7. To them, who by patient conti-*  
*nuance, in well-doing seek for glory, honour*  
*and immortality, (God will render) eternal*  
*life.* But to quote all the places wherein  
 the favour of God is declared to the right-  
 eous, would be to transcribe a great part of  
 the scriptures. Therefore,

3. It will appear that God loveth the  
 righteous, if we consider the particular in-  
 stances

SERM. stances of his favour shewn to such ; tho'

III. there are many, very many examples in scripture of righteous persons peculiarly favoured and blessed of God, I shall content myself with mentioning three or four remarkable ones. 1<sup>st</sup>, *Noah*, who was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and walked with God, to whom God said, *Thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation* ; and whom the apostle *Peter* calls a *preacher of righteousness* ; was so beloved of God, and found such favour in his eyes, that when a deluge was brought on the world of the ungodly, he and his family alone were preserved. 2<sup>dly</sup>, *Lot*, whom the apostle *Peter* calls *just Lot*, and *that righteous man*, was so favour'd of God, the Lord was so merciful to him, that when he destroyed the wicked city where he dwelt, he sent him away, and secured him. 3<sup>dly</sup>, *Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego*, who were the sincere servants of God, tho' they were cast into a burning fiery furnace for the sake of true religion, by the peculiar favour and miraculous power of God, received no hurt. 4<sup>thly</sup>, *Daniel*, who was remarkable for his piety, temperance, and justice, when, thro' the malice of his enemies he was cast into a den of lions, was miraculously preserved by God, who sent his angel and shut the lions mouths, so that he received no hurt. Thus it plainly appears that God loveth the righteous.

And

And now, having thus briefly considered these words, I shall conclude with a reflection or two on what has been said. SERM.  
III.

1. We may here see the exceeding great happiness of truly righteous persons. They are beloved of God, and so are entitled to all manner of felicity. How happy must they be who are beloved of their Creator ! of him who rules and governs all things ! How blessed are they who are beloved of him who is omnipotent, who is all-wise, whose goodness is unbounded, and who keepeth truth for ever ; who never wants power, nor skill, nor will to help them, and do them good ! The love of God carries in it all manner of happiness : Those whom God loves are approved and accepted of him, and have their sins forgiven ; those whom God loves are favoured and blessed in every respect by him here, and have the reward of eternal glory conferred on them in the world to come. Finally, those whom God loves have him for their portion, for their God, and he will be their exceeding great reward ; and the righteous being the persons whom God loves, are thus inexpressibly happy. Well therefore might the Psalmist say, *Blessed are the undefiled in the way : who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.*

2. Let us reflect a little on the misery of the wicked. As the righteous are beloved

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of



SERM. of God, so they only are; *for the wicked,*

III. *and him that doeth violence, his soul hateth;*

not that he hateth any as they are his creatures for any natural infirmities, but only as having revolted from him and goodness. As wickedness is contrary to righteousness, so the wicked will meet with the quite contrary treatment from the hands of God to what the righteous shall meet with: God disapproves and is displeased with the wicked; they are under the guilt of their transgressions, and their prayers, and whatever service they perform to God, will be rejected with indignation; whilst they continue in a sinful course, their very prayers are an abomination. And then the wicked have no title to the divine blessing on their affairs in this life; and will be so far from being happy in the favour of God, in the world to come, that they shall be miserably banished from his presence, and sentenced to punishment and everlasting destruction. The wicked have God for their enemy; and how unhappy must they be who have their Creator against them, in whose favour alone true happiness is to be found? But then, by the wicked, we are to understand such as obstinately continue in wicked courses, not such as sincerely repent, nor those, the general bent of whose disposition and behaviour is right, tho' attended with many weaknesses and imperfections, many slips and failings, many inadvertencies

## insured by Righteousness.

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advertencies and imprudences, and many sins SERM.  
and deviations from their duty, which they III.  
are heartily sorry for. The infirmities of  
such, as are otherwise sincere and good, are  
not to be called wickedness; and to the in-  
firmities of such, God will be merciful. There  
are many places of scripture where the miser-  
able state of the wicked is opposed to the  
happy condition of the righteous; as, *Psal.*  
*i. 6. The Lord knoweth the way of the right-*  
*eous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*  
*Psal. xxxiv. 15. The eyes of the Lord are upon*  
*the righteous, &c.* And in the next verse,  
*The face of the Lord is against them that do*  
*evil. Psal. cxlv. 20. The Lord preserveth*  
*all them that love him, but all the wicked will*  
*be destroy.* So in the verse following our  
text. *But the way of the wicked he turneth*  
*upside down.* Finally, the anger and displea-  
sure of God is as fully declared in scripture  
against the wicked, as his love and favour to  
the righteous; and there are many instances  
of his severe judgments already executed on  
them, as the destruction of the old world,  
*Sodom and Gomorrhah, &c.*

3. To conclude, Let us all be exhorted  
to follow after righteousness. The conside-  
ration of so great happiness as the righteous  
partake of, should certainly induce us thus  
to do. If the Lord loveth the righteous, how  
should we all endeavour to be of this charac-  
ter? If therefore we have made righteousness

S E R M. our practice, let us persevere in it, that so we  
III. may keep ourselves in the love of God. And if  
we have hitherto continued in sin, and neglected  
righteousness, or turned from it, let us, con-  
sidering the dreadful misery of such a state,  
speedily turn from our sins by repentance, and  
addict ourselves to a holy and righteous con-  
versation for the future, and then God will  
graciously, for Christ's sake, account us right-  
eous persons, and we shall be beloved by  
him. Finally, Let us all make holiness and  
righteousness our constant practice; let us  
*live soberly, justly and godly in the world, and*  
*have our conversation as becomes the gospel of*  
*Christ*; and then, being beloved of God, we  
shall be entitled to his favour and blessing  
here, and to eternal happiness hereafter, to  
*a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the*  
*righteous judge shall give us at that day; and*  
*not to us only, but to all them also that love his*  
*appearing.*

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## S E R M O N IV.

The great Duties of Christianity, recommended and explained.

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JUDE, ver. 20, 21.

*But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying always in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

**T**HE Son of Man had no sooner sowed SERM.  
the good seed, but the enemy sowed IV.  
tares amongst it. As Jesus Christ was the  
author of a most holy dispensation, and as  
multitudes were really converted from a sinful to a pious life by his and his apostles preaching, and so became true and sincere subjects of his kingdom; so the adversary soon introduced some very pernicious doctrines and corrupt practices, endeavouring to mix them with the pure and uncorrupt doctrine of our Saviour, and brought men into the church, and under a profession of christianity, who, having no regard to the  
E 3 christian



SERM.

IV.

christian life, but living loosely, and at random, as if they were subject to no law, or under no restraint, were a reproach and scandal to their profession, and occasioned the way of truth to be evil spoken of. The design of this short epistle of St. *Jude*, was to preserve the sincere and pious christians, to whom he wrote, from being seduced and corrupted by this sort of men, who were indeed as spots in their feasts of charity, or their love feasts, as *ver. 12.* he tells them, *ver. 4.* That *there were certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation*; or, as it may be more safely and truly rendered, *were before of old described, or characterized, as deserving this condemnation*; or, of whom it was before written, that this should be their condemnation; (ungodly men as *Enoch* long before described them in those who lived in his time) *turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ*; i. e. denying them in their works and practices, as the apostle speaks, *Tit. i. ult. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.* St. *Jude*, effectually to guard the christians from such an apostacy, shews the certainty of the condemnation of such men, in the example of the disobedient *Israelites*, *ver. 5.* of the fallen angels, *ver. 6.* and of *Sodom and Gommorrah*, *ver. 7.* Then from

the 8th to the 16th verse, he farther de-  
scribes their character, denounces judgments  
against them, and foretels their condemna-  
tion. After which, addressing himself to  
the sincere christians, he says, *But, beloved,  
remember the words which were spoken before  
of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how  
that they told you there should be mockers in the  
last time, who should walk after their own un-  
godly lusts. These be they who separate themselves,  
who go out from us, because they are not of us, as  
the apostle John speaks; or, who distinguish  
themselves from others as more spiritual, where-  
as they are truly sensual, and have not the spi-  
rit, or any spiritual disposition. Then come in  
the words of our text, as a preservative against  
the infection that the evil manners and cor-  
rupt conversation of these men might other-  
wise convey to them: But ye, beloved, build-  
ing up yourselves in your most holy faith, pray-  
ing in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the  
love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord  
Jesus Christ unto eternal life.* Here we have,

I. The main thing they are exhorted to,  
or the principal scope of this exhorta-  
tion, and that is, that they would keep  
themselves in the love of God. *Keep  
yourselves in the love of God.*

II. The means of doing this recommend-  
ed to them; that they might keep  
themselves in the love of God, they

were to *build up themselves on their most holy faith, and to pray in the Holy Ghost.*

III. The happy effect hereof, which should be an encouragement to them to keep themselves in the love of God ; if by this means they kept themselves in the love of God, they might *look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

I. The main and principal scope of this exhortation is this, that they should *keep themselves in the love of God.* Here we are to consider this love of God, what it is to keep ourselves in it, and when we may be said to do this.

The love of God here may admit of two acceptations.

1. It may be understood of that love wherewith we are to love God. We should *love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength* ; this there is the highest reason for, and this we are often exhorted to ; and the love of God may signify this love, the love, esteem and affection we have, or ought to have, for the divine Being, our Creator, Preserver and Benefactor, the first and best being, the author  
and

and giver of all good. This is the frequent SERM. Meaning of this phrase, *the love of God*, in IV. scripture. Thus, 1 John v. 3. *For this is the love of God, that ye keep his commandments*; by the keeping the commandments of God, we manifest the sincerity of our love to him. So, chap. iii. 17. *But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother hath need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* i. e. How can such a man as that be said to love God? Thus our Saviour says to the Jews, *But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you*; or, that ye do not love God, John v. 42. And, to add no more, the love of God is to be taken in the same sense, Luke xi. 42. *But wo unto you Pharisees; for ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs; and pass over judgment, and the love of God.* Thus then by the love of God is often meant our love to him, or that love wherewith we should love him. And certainly as we are obliged to love God, so we should keep ourselves in this love, we should persevere in it, we should continue in it, we should not only love him for some time, but always; our love to him should be constant, we should love him as long as we live. And without doubt, our thus continuing in the love of God, our continuing to love him, and preserving and maintaining a sincere, hearty and prevalent affection to him; is the most likely



SERM. ly means to preserve us from being led away  
IV. with the error of the wicked, and to prevent

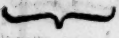
our being seduced and corrupted by their evil counsels, and bad examples. As the fear of God, our fear of him, so the love of God, or our love to him, is an excellent means to preserve us from falling into sin; they who truly love the Lord will undoubtedly hate evil. And so this sense of the love of God may seem agreeable enough to the apostle's design in this place, which was, to preserve the christians from falling in with some evil and vicious persons among them, as I have observed; in order to which he might be supposed to exhort them to preserve in their hearts a sincere love to God. However, I am apt to think this not the sense of the phrase here. But,

2. The love of God may signify his love to us. Thus, 1 *John* iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he* (viz. Christ) *laid down his life for us.* And, chap. iv. 9. *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live thro' him.* Here the love of God signifies his love to us: And so it does, *Rom.* viii. ult. where the apostle is expressing his assurance that no power whatsoever shall be able to separate them from it: *For I am persuaded,* says he, *that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

*come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;* SERM. IV.

*i. e. from his grace and favour. And in that well known valediction of the apostle, 2 Cor. xiii. ult. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Thus then the love of God signifies also his love to us; and this I take to be the sense of the phrase in our text, where the apostle exhorts the christians to keep themselves in the love of God; for the love of God is as often, if not oftener, used in this sense, than in the other; and besides the phrase of keeping ourselves in it agrees better with this sense of the words; for this we read of abiding and continuing in the love of Christ, which is to be understood of his love to us, or the love wherewith he loves us; as John xv. 9, 10. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue you in my love. If you keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. And as abiding or continuing in the love of God, is abiding or continuing in his favour; so keeping ourselves in the love of God, seems to be a phrase of just the same import. And so this keeping ourselves in the love of God, is not so much the means of our escaping the errors and vices of the wicked, as the effect of our escaping those*

SERM. those errors and vices. For as those who in-

IV. dulge themselves in such courses do lose the favour of God, and forfeit his love, so those who preserve themselves from such practices, and keep themselves pure of such vices, do of consequence, at the same time, keep themselves in the love of God. Thus then, by the love of God, we are to understand his love to us, the love wherewith God loves us, or in other words, his favour, benignity and loving-kindness. This love includes the divine approbation and acceptance; those whom God loves, he approves and accepts of; he pardons their sins, admits them to the privilege of being his people, and servants, and children, and graciously accepts all their religious performances. This love is a love of complacency, and it supposes that God takes delight in the persons who are the objects of it; that he likes them, and is well-pleased with them. There is indeed a love of pity, and compassion, and benevolence, which God is declared to have towards all men, even the worst of sinners; but the love we are speaking of, is such a love, as only the righteous enjoy, which supposes the divine complacency, approbation and acceptance. Again, this love includes the divine blessing; they whom God so loves are blessed by him, he does them good after a peculiar manner, orders all their affairs for the best, and makes all things work together for their good in the end.

Whether

recommended and explained.

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Whether they have little or much of this SERM.  
world's good, whether they are in prosperity IV.  
or adversity, whether they are afflicted, or

otherwise, they still enjoy the divine blessing ; God is their friend, who always designs their good ; he is their shield, their support and stay, the strength of their heart, and their refuge in all times of trouble, and delivers them whenever it is for their real good to be delivered. Finally, this love of God supposes persons being entitled to the promises of a future reward, of eternal life, glory and bliss ; the effect of this love is the divine blessing here, and eternal happiness in the divine presence hereafter. This then is the love of God that we are exhorted to keep ourselves in ; and surely this is a matter of the highest importance and concern to us. The love of God is more valuable than any thing besides, whatever we want, if we enjoy but his love, we are happy, and can want nothing that is truly good for us : *In his favour is life, and his loving-kindness is better than life.* And as we ought in the first place to get an interest in his favour and loving-kindness, so we should above all things take care to keep ourselves in it.

*Keep yourselves in the love of God, i. e. preserve yourselves in it ; as you have at present an interest in his love, endeavour to secure that interest, to preserve that invaluable privilege. Behave yourselves so as that you may*  
*continue*



SERM. *continue* in the divine favour, that you may

IV. *still* enjoy the loving-kindness of the Lord, and may *always* be of that happy number who have a share in his love ; that you may abide in his favour, and as he has loved you, he may continue to love you, may still approve, and accept, and delight in you, may always delight to bless you, and to do you good, and you may continue to be of that happy number, for whom the heavenly reward is graciously designed. Take heed lest by following the wicked in their ungodly practices, you fall of the grace of God, you lose his favour, and forfeit your interest in his love ; but do you preserve such a temper, and persevere in such a practice, that you may always be beloved of him, and may be happy in his love both here and in the world to come. This is the import of this exhortation, *Keep yourselves in the love of God* ; which being so easy, plain and manifest, I shall insist no longer upon it.

And shall only observe farther, that if we keep ourselves in the love of God, we must constantly avoid what is hateful and displeasing to him, and must persevere in that which he loves, and likes, and is well-pleased with. Hateful practices will make us hateful in the sight of God ; we thereby proclaim ourselves to be his enemies, and so must expose ourselves to his anger and displeasure. If we love that which God hates, we cannot expect

pect to be loved of him ; and therefore, if SERM.  
we would continue in his love, and abide in IV.  
his favour, we must continue to avoid that  
which he hates and is displeased with. And  
farther, we must continue to do what he  
loves, and likes, and is pleased with ; we  
must persevere in a conformity to his will,  
must always love that which he loves, and  
practise the things he requires of us. God  
loves those, and only those who love him,  
and if we would keep ourselves in his love  
and favour, we must continue to love him.  
Now, they who love God do love that which  
he loves, and do that which is well-pleasing  
in his sight, and agreeable to his will ; no-  
thing short of this will prove us to be real  
lovers of God, whom he will love and fa-  
vour, and bless, and reward ; and therefore  
if we would keep ourselves in the love of  
God, and continue in his favour, we must  
persevere in that which he likes and approves,  
and must preserve such a temper and conver-  
sation as is agreeable to his will.

Having thus considered the main and  
principal Scope of this exhortation, *Keep  
yourselves in the love of God*, I come now,

II. To consider the means prescribed and  
recommended for the doing of this ; which  
was, the *building themselves up in their most  
holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost*. But  
ye, beloved, *building up yourselves in your most  
holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep  
your-*

SERM. *yourselves in the love of God.* I shall consider

IV. each of these apart. And,

I. *Building up yourselves in your most holy faith.* Here we may consider what we are to understand by this faith, what by building up ourselves on it, and how the building up ourselves on our most holy faith is a means of keeping us in the love of God.

I. As to this faith, called here *your most holy faith*, by it we are to understand the whole doctrine of the gospel, or revelation of God's will, which Christ and his apostles have made to the world. This we are often to understand by faith, in the epistles of the apostle *Paul*. And this seems to be the meaning of it in the second epistle of *Peter*, an epistle parallel to this of *St. Jude*, ver. 1.—*To them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* But it is very plain, that by the word *faith*, we are to understand the doctrine of the gospel in the third verse of this very epistle of *St. Jude*, where, speaking to the christians, he says, *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.* The word *faith* is used but once more in all this epistle, and that is in our text, *building up yourselves on*  
your

*your most holy faith* ; and it seems most reasonable to understand it here in the same sense : And the doctrine of the gospel is called *faith*, because it is proposed as a thing to be believed, embraced, and firmly depended upon ; and because it requires obedience, as proceeding from a sincere faith in God, such as *Abraham's* was, and declares that we are justified by such faith, and not by the deeds of the law. SERM. IV.

2. What are we to understand by building up ourselves in this faith ? The church of God is often represented under the notion of a building, which you know consists of a foundation and a superstructure : Thus we are said to be *built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*, i. e. upon their doctrine and ministry, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone*, Eph. ii. 20. This is most commonly to be understood of the whole church, called also *the body of Christ* ; and as the several members of it make up one regular body, whereof Christ is the head, so they may be considered as making up one regular building, in a beautiful order, symmetry, and proportion of parts, whereof Jesus Christ is the foundation, or chief corner-stone. Thus in the two last verses of the forecited Eph. ii. *In whom*, i. e. in Christ, *all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord ; in whom you also are builded together for an habitation of*

F God



SERM. *God through the spirit.* And so 1 Pet. ii. 5.

IV. *Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, &c.* And as this is said of the whole church collectively, so it may be said of every particular christian, that he is built upon Jesus Christ, upon the faith of him, upon the doctrine of the gospel, as his foundation. But then as buildings are capable of improvements and additions, the same foundation remaining, so we may, and ought to improve ourselves in our most holy faith, having laid that as a foundation, and begun to build upon it, we should go on to build upon it, and should be daily making improvements in our spiritual building, that it may become still more regular, exact and suitable to the foundation. And when we thus endeavour to improve in the gospel of Christ, to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of him, then we may be said to build up ourselves in our most holy faith. And this improvement may respect our knowledge, our confirmation and establishment in the Gospel, our temper and disposition, and our practice.

1<sup>st</sup>, This improvement may respect our knowledge ; we should endeavour to improve in the knowledge of the gospel, we should acquaint ourselves more and more with it, and should labour after a more thorow understanding in all the parts of it, and the connexion that is between them, and the dependence

pendence they have one upon another. I SERM.  
mean, we should do this, so far as is neces- IV.  
sary to influence us more and more to obey  
the precepts of it, and to stir us up and en-  
gage us to the practice of true piety. This  
sort of improvement in knowledge is often  
called *edification*, or being edified in scrip-  
ture, and as it tends to piety and true good-  
ness, so it is called *edification of God*, or god-  
ly edifying; as, 1 Tim. i. 4. *Neither give  
heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which  
minister questions rather than godly edifying  
which is in faith.* Thus then we should im-  
prove in the knowledge of the gospel, we  
should endeavour to acquaint ourselves more  
and more with the nature and design of it,  
with the true end of Christ's coming into the  
world, with the precepts, promises and threat-  
nings of his dispensation; with the several  
duties it requires of us, and the strong mo-  
tives, and high encouragements it gives to  
the practice of them. And this is one way  
of building ourselves up on our most holy  
faith; when we remain not as babes, unskil-  
ful in the word of righteousness, but endea-  
vour to be as grown men, who, by reason of  
use, have their senses exercised to discern both  
good and evil.

2dly, This improving in the gospel, signi-  
fied by the phrase of *building up ourselves on  
our most holy faith*, may respect our confir-  
mation and establishment therein; when we

SERM. are more and more settled and confirmed in

IV. the belief and profession of it; and to this,

the attaining to a good degree of knowledge in it, does very much conduce; for such persons are not as children, liable to be tossed about with every wind of doctrine. Thus the apostle *Paul* rejoiced to behold the steadfastness of the *Colossians* faith in Christ, *Col. ii. 5.* and *verses 6, 7.* he says, *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.* And, *Rom. xv. 2.* when the apostle says, *Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good, to edification:* By edification here he seems to mean confirmation, or establishment in the faith.

3dly, This spiritual improvement respects our temper and disposition. When we not only know and believe the gospel, but endeavour to form our minds and tempers by it, and to have our affections and dispositions more and more agreeable and conformable to it. When the great truths of the gospel make deeper impressions upon us, and more and more influence us; when we not only know our duty better, but have a greater will to it; when we are more and more transformed by the renewing of our mind; when our temper, frame and disposition, our desires, inclinations and affections, our purposes,

poses, aims and designs become more and more and agreeable to the genius, temper and spirit of the gospel, then we may be said to build up ourselves on our most holy faith. And this, SERM.  
IV.

*4thly*, Leads to the other improvement in the gospel, *viz.* improving in the practice of it. When we improve in the temper and spirit of the gospel, we shall of consequence improve in the life and conversation which it recommends. And this, together with the former, is the best improvement in the gospel of Christ, the most valuable sense of building ourselves up on our most holy faith, without which all other proficiencies and improvements will signify nothing. The increase of our knowledge will not avail us, if our temper and conversation be not mended and improved; and they ought always to be mended and improved in proportion to our knowledge. Indeed, the more we know of the gospel, and the more we are established in the belief of it, the more likely it is that our minds and practice should be reformed by it; and we should make this sort of improvement in the gospel the great end of all other improvements; our principal aim and endeavour should be to gain more of the christian temper and spirit, to walk more worthy of the Lord unto all-pleasing, and to be more fruitful in every good work; and, in short, to add to our *faith virtue, and to virtue know-*  
F 3
ledge,



SERM. *ledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to*

IV. *temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.* Thus we have seen how we should build ourselves up on our most holy faith, or what we may understand by that expression.

III. The third thing here to be considered is, how the building ourselves up on our most holy faith is a means of keeping in the love of God. This is owing to its being a most holy faith. God is a most holy being, and this being the nature of God, the faith on which we are to build ourselves up being a most holy faith, must be agreeable to this holy nature of God; and so whilst we are conformed to this most holy faith, we shall enjoy the divine love and favour, and the more we are conformed to it, the more of that love and favour we shall enjoy. The Gospel of Christ is a most holy dispensation, and so is the most perfect pattern of the divine mind; the precepts of it are holy; the example it proposes to us is holy, and the whole design of it is to advance holiness; and holiness being that which God loves, they who obey the gospel, who copy after that divine institution, and have their mind and conversion conformed to that holy dispensation, must of consequence be loved of God, and enjoy his favour and approbation. More particularly,

1<sup>st</sup>, The gospel teaches us to avoid all sin S E R M.  
 and vice, whatsoever is contrary to his will, IV.  
 or displeasing in his sight. It forbids and  
 condemns all unrighteousness, impiety and  
 intemperance; it teaches to deny *ungodliness*  
*and worldly lusts*, and to *depart from iniquity*.  
 These are the things which God hates, and  
 for which his wrath will fall upon the chil-  
 dren of disobedience; and they who conform  
 to the gospel, and build themselves up on  
 their most holy faith, do hate and abhor all  
 such things as these; and so hating that  
 which God hates, and avoiding that which  
 God would have them avoid, they will escape  
 his displeasure, and will have an interest in  
 his love and favour. *God is angry with*  
*the wicked every day, and the wicked, and him*  
*that doth violence, his soul hateth*; but the  
 gospel teaches us to avoid all unrighteous-  
 ness and wickedness, to mortify the deeds of  
 the body, to crucify the flesh with the affec-  
 tions and lusts, to purify ourselves from all  
 filthiness of the flesh and spirit, to put off  
 anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, impurity,  
 intemperance, and all other vices; and final-  
 ly, to abstain from all that is displeasing to a  
 holy and righteous God, or contrary to his  
 nature and will; and the more we build up  
 ourselves on this most holy faith, the more  
 we hate, and forsake, and avoid all such  
 things.

SERM.

IV.

2dly, This most holy faith, the gospel of Christ, not only teaches us to avoid all sin and vice, all impurity and unrighteousness, and whatever is displeasing to God, but it teaches us the practice of all virtue, righteousness, and goodness, and whatever is well-pleasing to God, and agreeable to his holy nature and will. I have shewn you, that if we would keep ourselves in the love of God, we must avoid what he would have us avoid, and must do what he would have us do; and this the gospel recommends to us; for it teaches us, that *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world.* The gospel teaches what is really acceptable and well-pleasing to God. *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and he that in these things serveth Christ, is accepted with God, and approved of men.* So that he who makes it his business to conform to the gospel, or to build up himself on that most holy faith, is such a one as God would have him to be, and so must be loved of him, and enjoy his favour. The gospel teaches us to be humble; and *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace, or sheweth favour, to the humble.* The gospel teaches us to be kind, charitable and beneficent, and liberal according to our ability; and *God loves a cheerful giver, and with such sacrifices he is well pleased.* It teaches us to be sincere and upright; and *the righte-*  
*eous*

*teous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance* SERM.  
*doth behold the upright ; and the prayer of the* IV.  
*upright is his delight.* It teaches us to be

righteous ; and *the Lord loveth the righteous.* It teaches us to be pure in heart ; and they are blessed, because they shall see God, and enjoy his favour for ever. Finally, it teaches us to be holy in all manner of conversation ; and the apostle *John* declares, that *if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with him, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* Thus the building ourselves up on our most holy faith is a means of keeping us in the love of God ; yea this very thing, as it respects our temper and conversation, does actually keep us in the love of God. And if we would be always kept in the love of God, we must be always building ourselves up on our most holy faith.

3dly, The other thing recommended as a means of keeping us in the love of God is, *praying in the Holy Ghost.* But ye, beloved, *building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, praying in the Holy Ghost.*

1st, Some have thought that the apostle here refers to the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost which were then common in the churches, among which prayer was one ; for as christians used then to sing, and to deliver doctrines, and to speak to edification, and to



SERM. exhortation, and to comfort, by an extraor-

IV.  ordinary gift, so they used to pray by an extraordinary gift, i. e. by inspiration; and this being so common at that time, the apostle may well be supposed to refer to it in this expression, *Praying in the Holy Ghost*. But, 2dly, We may understand here the ordinary assistance and influence of the Holy Ghost, which all good men partake of in prayer, as well as in all other duties. And so the meaning may be, praying with those motions and desires which are excited, with those affections which are raised, and with that temper and disposition of mind which is wrought and preserved by the Holy Ghost, so as that we may be suitably affected with the consideration of the being we pray to, with our own frailties, and with the things we pray for, may sincerely desire them, and may be disposed to make a right use of them.

3dly, Possibly this may be understood of a man's own spirit, and we may read it thus, *Praying with a holy spirit*, i. e. with a holy temper and disposition of mind. In this sense I am inclined to understand the words, 2 Cor. vi. 6. for all the other things there mentioned were personal to the apostle, and it is not so natural to suppose that the Holy Ghost should be inserted between them: Let us therefore, instead of the *Holy Ghost*, read *a holy spirit*, and see how it will stand then: *By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering,*  
by

by kindness, by a holy spirit, by love unfeigned; SERM.  
understanding by a holy spirit, a holy temper and disposition. For thus the word *spirit* is often used for a man's mind, temper and disposition. So our Saviour tells his disciples, *Ye know not what spirit ye are of*. Indeed a holy spirit, signifying the temper and disposition of a man's mind, sounds a little harsh, because we are not used to it; but why may not the spirit of a good man be called an holy spirit, as well as a faithful spirit, an humble spirit, a contrite spirit, a meek and quiet spirit, and the like? especially since we read of the *sanctification* or *holiness of the spirit*, of *being renewed in the spirit of our mind*, and of *being holy both in body and spirit*; for as humble in spirit is the same with an humble spirit, so holy in spirit is the same with an holy spirit. And the apostle may very well exhort to pray with an holy spirit, or a pure heart, since *if we regard iniquity in our heart, God will not bear us*; and the apostle *Paul* exhorts to *lift up holy hands in prayer*, 1 Tim. ii. 8.

Having thus considered this phrase, let us now see how such prayer may be a means of keeping ourselves in the love of God.

I. In its own nature it tends to this. Sincere prayer, I say, in its own nature, tends to keep us in the love of God. For it is mighty serviceable towards keeping up a right frame, temper and disposition of mind towards

SERM. wards God, and preserving the life of reli-

IV. gion in us. It confirms and increases good

habits, and pious and suitable sensations of mind, which are most likely to produce suitable actions, and an agreeable conversation. When men cast off prayer, and neglect to make their solemn addresses to God, it is no wonder if they grow cold, indifferent and careless in all other parts of their duty. But if we keep up prayer, and do not faint in that holy exercise, we shall be likely to keep up suitable apprehensions of God, of his power, wisdom, his holiness, and his goodness; and to have our minds suitably impressed and affected with divine things; and so we shall be disposed to be holy as God is holy, to love him, and reverence him, and obey him, in doing which we shall be kept in his love.

2. Sincere prayer is a means of keeping us in the divine love and favour, inasmuch as it is a means of our obtaining help, and assistance, and strength, and direction from God. If God did not afford us his help, we might soon be overcome by temptation, and drawn into sinful courses, and fall from his favour; but his strength is sufficient to uphold us, his spirit is sufficient to preserve us, and his wisdom is sufficient to direct us. But he requires us to address him for these invaluable advantages and favours; and if we sincerely do so, we may expect to meet with  
sufficient

sufficient help, assistance and direction in our christian course. *For if we being evil,* as our Saviour says, *know how to give good gifts un-* S E R M. IV.

*to our children, how much more will our heavenly father give the holy spirit to them that ask him.* And St. James says, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him,* James i. 5. Thus we see that sincere and upright prayer is a means of preserving us in the divine favour.

III. I come now, in the third place, to consider the happy effect of all this, which should be an encouragement to us to endeavour by this means to keep ourselves in the love of God. If by building ourselves up on our most holy faith, and sincere prayer, we keep ourselves in the love of God, we may then look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life; *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.* Hereby is signified the compleat salvation that shall be brought to them at the revelation, the second coming of Jesus Christ; *when to them that look for him, he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* This is the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ; thus the apostle prays for Onesiphorus, 2 Tim. i. 18. *The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.* And truly this salvation is a great and an unspeakable mercy, if we consider that we were all sinners,



SERM. sinners, and on that account in a most miser-

IV. able condition, or might justly have been so.

— We might have been banished from the presence and enjoyment of God for ever, instead of being admitted to that glorious and most delightful vision; we might have been punished instead of being rewarded, and miserably destroyed instead of being saved. And certainly that such sinful, unworthy and ill-deserving creatures should be made partakers of the salvation which is in Jesus Christ, with eternal glory, is unspeakable grace and mercy. And this is *the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*, because he is the immediate author of this salvation. He did and suffered a great deal for it here; he died for our sins, shed his blood that we might be justified, and pardoned, and saved from wrath thro' him, *was delivered for our manifold offences, and raised again for our justification; and thus being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him. He is the captain of our salvation, and was made perfect thro' sufferings; and now he is able to save all to the uttermost that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* As he suffered and died to procure this salvation for us, so he will powerfully save and reward us hereafter. Thus then this is the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'tis his grace, 'tis his love. And the grace and mercy of God appears in a wonderful manner in providing such a Saviour

our for us, and ordaining him to be the captain SERM.  
of our salvation. The mercy of God, as well IV.  
as the mercy of Christ, is displayed in saving  
us, 'tis the grace of God which brings salva-  
tion to us, and he *of his abundant mercy has*  
*begotten us again unto a lively hope by the re-*  
*surrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

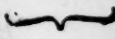
We should now a little more distinctly  
consider this gracious and merciful salva-  
tion. 'Tis 1<sup>st</sup>, a salvation, a deliverance from  
all evil, from all sin and misery, from all the  
afflictions and disorders which we suffered  
here, and from that misery and punishment  
which was the just desert of our sins in ano-  
ther state. 'Tis a deliverance from the wrath  
to come, from everlasting destruction, and  
from death eternal, and from all kind of con-  
demnation. And certainly this is great grace  
and mercy, even if it terminated here. To  
deliver the guilty from the just punishment  
of their crimes, to save the miserable, who  
were made so by their own sin and fault, is  
certainly an act of stupendous grace and  
mercy. But this is not all; this mercy of  
our Lord Jesus Christ extends farther yet; it  
is mercy unto eternal life. Eternal life is  
procured for us by him, and he will bestow  
it at his second coming on all those who love  
his appearing, who shall live and abide for  
ever, and be for ever happy. Christ has pur-  
chased an inheritance for us, even *an inheri-*  
*tance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and*  
*that*

SERM. *that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for*

IV. *us.* He will give eternal life unto all his

sheep, and unto all his sincere disciples and followers ; they shall obtain eternal glory, honour and peace, everlasting rest and happiness, and perpetual and uninterrupted joys and delights in the divine presence. They shall be with Christ, and shall behold his glory, they shall be like him, and shall see him as he is, and shall have their vile bodies changed, and made like unto his glorious body. Finally, they shall dwell for ever in the regions of light and bliss, where God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain ; but all things shall be well with them, and they shall enjoy a perfection of body and mind, and shall receive a glorious and eternal reward ; for God himself will be their exceeding great reward, and their everlasting portion. This is the *mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*, which all those who keep themselves in the love of God may look for : They may firmly believe it, they may hope for it and expect it, and they may rejoice in hope of it ; they may hope to the end for the grace that shall be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ ; and rejoicing in hope of this Glory, may rejoice even in tribulations, waiting patiently for their deliverance and salvation. They who have their conver-

sation

sation in heaven, and so lead a life agreeable SERM.  
 to the gospel, having an interest in the divine IV.  
 love and favour, may *look for*, and expect,   
*the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall*  
*change their vile body, that it may be fashioned*  
*like unto his glorious body, Phil. iii. 20, 21.*

This is the happy privilege of all those who build up themselves on their most holy faith, and so continue in the love of God. As God loves them he will certainly reward them, and they may have the comfortable hope and joyful expectation of it. This hope and expectation is the blessed effect and consequence of their keeping themselves in the love of God, by a sincere conformity to the gospel in heart and life. To which purpose is that in *Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13. For the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world; looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* Thus then they who building themselves up on their most holy faith, keep themselves in the love of God, may look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

I shall now briefly apply what has been said, and so conclude.

1. We may observe here the reality of a divine assistance. Persons, in order to keep themselves in the love of God, are to make



SERM. use of prayer; they are to pray that God

IV. would keep them in his love, or that he would so far influence and assist them, as may be necessary to their keeping themselves in his love. Praying to God in this case, in order to our continuing in his love, must suppose some divine assistance. And indeed, this is a thing sufficiently intimated in scripture in abundance of places; particularly in the epistle to the *Philippians*, God is said to *work in us both to will and to do according to his good pleasure*. And it is a great comfort and satisfaction to us that there is such divine assistance afforded to us in the discharge of our duty; and that we may be assured, when God requires any thing of us, if we are not able of ourselves to do it, he will enable us to do it, or will grant us all necessary assistance for that purpose.

2. We may observe, that in order to our perseverance, or keeping ourselves in the love of God, something is necessary to be done on our part, which if we do not, we shall not continue in the love of God. This exhortation would be altogether needless and impertinent, if all was to be done in us and for us, and nothing was to be done by us. How could the apostle with any propriety say, *Keep yourselves in the love of God*, if they could do nothing towards keeping themselves in it? Certainly, as we ought to pray for the divine assistance, so we should use our own

endea-

vours, and do what we can ourselves : as the S E R M.  
very praying for divine assistance supposes our IV.  
doing something. As there could be no room  
for prayer in this case, without supposing  
some divine assistance to be obtained, so there  
could be no place for it if all were divine as-  
sistance, and we could do nothing ourselves.  
Let us therefore remember that tho' God  
*works in us to will and to do of his good plea-  
sure, yet we are to work out our own salvation  
with fear and trembling.* Therefore,

3. Let us be exhorted to keep ourselves  
in the love of God, and to that end to build  
up ourselves on our most holy faith, and to  
pray to God continually. If any of us are so  
unhappy as to be under the displeasure of our  
Maker, as I hope we are not, let us give  
ourselves no rest till we are reconciled to him,  
and have obtained an interest in his love and  
favour. And if we are so happy as to be in  
his favour, let us endeavour to continue in it,  
let us keep ourselves in the love of God.  
And in order hereunto, let us build up our-  
selves on our most holy faith, and be still  
making proficiency in the gospel of Christ.  
Let us be going on unto perfection ; for if  
we do not go forward in our christian course,  
we shall be in great danger of going back-  
ward. Let us endeavour to grow in grace,  
and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savi-  
our Jesus Christ ; and to that end, let us ap-  
ply ourselves to the word of God, that word

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SERM. of his grace, which is able to build us up, and

IV. to give us an inheritance among all them that

are sanctified. Let us read it and study it, and exercise ourselves in it, and make use of all means for improving it. Let us use diligence, care and circumspection in our christian course. This we are frequently exhorted to ; and indeed there is great need of it, considering what difficulties, oppositions and temptations we often have to encounter with, and how prone we are to grow careless and remiss. Finally, Let us implore divine aid and assistance, and let us always make use of it, and co-operate with it, that we may always keep ourselves in the love of God. Let us avoid sin, which is hateful and displeasing to him, persevere in holiness and righteousness, and then we may look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, and may be assured, that *neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

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# SERMON V.

The Nature and Obligation of Prayer.

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I THESS. V. 17.

*Pray without ceasing.*

THE apostle in this epistle, expresses in a wonderful manner, his love and affection towards the church of the *Thessalonians*; they were dear unto him upon the account of their ready reception of the gospel, of their steady and firm adherence to the christian faith, and the many sufferings and persecutions they had chearfully endured for the sake of it: hereupon he commends them, and thanks God on their behalf; and forasmuch, as they were still exposed to various and sore trials, and met with great opposition in their holy profession, he expresses his tender concern for their perseverance, and prays earnestly, that God would preserve them, and *build them up in their most holy faith*, and make them abound in the exercise of all holy and religious duties; and then he briefly shews them the nature

SERM.  
V.



SERM. and design of the christian dispensation, and  
 V. tells them, that the will of God was their  
 sanctification, and that they were called unto holiness, which he therefore earnestly exhorts them to follow after; and in the close of the epistle, he proposes some brief exhortations to several christian duties, among which, is that in our text, *Pray without ceasing*.

As the christian religion most strictly enjoins all manner of pious and holy exercises, and most plainly discovers to us the nature of all those duties that God requires us to perform, so it affords the best and noblest encouragements to the practice of them: we are therein assured of the favour of God, if we sincerely endeavour to do those things which please him; the most valuable and glorious promises are therein made to the righteous, and an eternal reward of the highest happiness assured to them who preserve a holy conversation. The duties, that immediately respect God, ourselves, and our neighbour, are in the clearest manner proposed, with the highest reason enforced, and by the greatest encouragements recommended to us in the gospel, wherein we are taught to live soberly, righteously and godly in the world. Whatever is agreeable to the true light of nature, to the relation we stand in to the divine Being, and the obligations we are under

under to one another, is the general design SERM.  
of the doctrine of Christ. V.

As all duties, even those which respect ourselves or our neighbour, have an ultimate regard to God, as they result from the condition he has placed us in in the world, are performed in obedience to his will, and directed to his glory, so there are some that immediately respect God himself, which follow from the relation we are in to him, as he is our Creator, our supreme governor and continual benefactor; which duties contain the worship and service that is due to him from us, who are rational creatures dependent on him: and these duties, which immediately regard the divine Being, and are of a moral nature, are various, such as love to him, trust in him, praising of him, praying to him, giving thanks to his name, and the like. That which we are exhorted to in our text, and commanded to continue in, and which therefore we are to treat of at this time, is the duty of prayer, the reasonableness and morality of which duty is evident, and the usefulness and advantage of it in every condition very great, and most highly to be esteemed.

In treating on these words, I shall shew what prayer is, and wherein it consists; how it is to be performed by us, so that it may be accepted of God, and answer its end; what we are to understand by praying with-

SERM. out ceasing; and why we are thus to be  
 V. found in the practice of this duty.

I. We are to consider what prayer is, and wherein it consists. And here I shall not insist upon all the several parts, that are usually reckoned in prayer, such as confession, thanksgiving, and the like; but shall confine myself to that, which is chiefly signified by this word, *viz.* petition, which is also intended by it in this place, for thanksgiving is enjoined in the following verse, *in every thing give thanks.*

Prayer then is our addressing God in a way of petition or request, wherein we ask things of him, and desire him to do such and such things for us; it is, as the scripture speaks, *a making known our requests unto God*; not that we are to think, that we inform God by our prayers; for as all things, so every state and circumstance of ours, is perfectly known to him, and he *knows what things we have need of before we ask him.* But in prayer we humbly present our case before him, which he was perfectly acquainted with before, and supplicate his goodness for those things we stand in need of. Many are our necessities, and various are our wants; as we are dependent creatures, and live in a sinful and miserable world, we stand in need of many things, and God, who is our Creator, is all-sufficient and able to supply all our wants; and such is his goodness, that he is ever inclined

clined to bestow his blessings on his crea- SERM.  
V.  
 tures. There are many blessings necessary  
 to be obtained by us, and many evils to be  
 avoided; the blessings of life are to be sought  
 at the hands of God, and those that are ne-  
 cessary for our souls, and relate to the life to  
 come, should always be the subject of our  
 prayers and supplications; thus we should  
 pray for the forgiveness of our sins, for the  
 holy spirit, for help against temptations,  
 for deliverance from evil, and the like;  
*and in every thing by prayer and supplication,*  
*we should make known our requests unto God.*  
 We are likewise not only to pray for our-  
 selves, but for one another, as the apostle  
*James* advises, ch. v. ver. 16. *Pray one for*  
*another*; and this we should do for all men,  
 and for all ranks and conditions of them,  
 1 *Tim.* ii. 1, 2. *I exhort therefore that first of*  
*all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giv-*  
*ing of thanks be made for all men; for kings,*  
*and for all that are in authority.* We should  
 pray for blessings on our neighbour, where-  
 by I mean all our fellow-creatures; for their  
 temporal and eternal welfare; and from our  
 prayers, we should not exclude even our  
 enemies, *Mat.* v. 44. *Pray for them that de-*  
*spitefully use you and persecute you.* Prayer  
 is either secret, by one's self, or private in  
 one's family, or publick with others in an  
 assembly or congregation; it is certainly our  
 duty to attend on publick prayer, and to  
 maintain



SERM. maintain prayer in our houses ; and he that

V.  does not make conscience of praying by himself in secret, is also very unworthy of the christian name. We ought frequently, and as we have opportunity, to express our desires to God, between him and ourselves, and to pour out our heart before him in secret, *Mat. vi. 6. But thou when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy father which is in secret, and thy father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* True prayer is the presenting the desires of our heart to God ; and though words are necessary when we join with others in this duty, yet still we must remember that it is the heart that God regards, in this duty as in all others, and by ourselves, it is indifferent whether we use words in prayer or not ; as God does not need our words, so neither does he respect our prayers ever the more for them ; our desires are sufficiently known to him, and the silent raising of our minds to him, is well-pleasing in his sight. As words are not essential to prayer, so we ought not to think that God is moved by entreaties, as we are, and much less that our much speaking should prevail upon him to hear us ; though great blessings are obtained by prayer, yet it is not that God is moved or prevailed upon to change his mind, but it is his will that those, who pray to him as they ought, should

should have their prayers answered, and SERM.  
those favours bestowed on them, as are pro- V.  
mised to such as are found in the sincere ex-  
ercise of this duty; and hereupon we are  
cautioned against much speaking and vain  
repetitions in prayer, *Mat. vi. 7, 8.* *But*  
*when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the*  
*heathen do, for they think that they shall be*  
*heard for their much speaking; be not ye*  
*therefore like unto them, for your father*  
*knoweth what things ye have need of before*  
*ye ask him.* So in *Eccl. v. 2.* *Be not rash*  
*with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be*  
*hasty to utter any thing before God, for God is*  
*in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let*  
*thy words be few.* And therefore farther, we  
are not to understand by the parable of the  
unjust judge, *Luke xviii. 1, &c.* and the im-  
portunate friend, *Luke xi. 5, &c.* as if God  
was to be moved by our importunity; but  
the design of those parables, which alone is  
to be observed in discourses of that nature,  
is, to prevent our being discouraged from  
the exercise of prayer, or the throwing it  
wholly off, because it is not presently an-  
swered. As to the manner of prayer, though  
I am far from censuring those who use a set  
form prepared by others, which I believe  
many a sincere christian does; yet as our  
wants are various, and cannot well be com-  
prehended in set forms composed by others,  
I think it most proper to use one's own ex-  
pressions

SERM. preffions in prayer, as they plainly and naturally flow ; and if we read the scriptures diligently, we shall from them be furnished with the best and most suitable matter for prayer upon all occasions.

Thus have I shewn you what this duty of prayer is, *viz.* that it is a supplicating the divine goodness for the bestowing of all manner of blessings upon ourselves and others ; the serious humble and fervent expression of our desires to God, to which the promise of a blessing is most graciously made.

II. We are now to consider how we ought to behave ourselves in prayer, or what qualifications are necessary to our prayers, in order to render them acceptable.

That our prayers may be accepted, we should have something more than the bare outward form of devotion ; a suitable disposition of mind, and an agreeable life is necessary, for without these, our prayers will do us no good. More particularly therefore,

1. If we would have our prayers accepted, they must be attended with holiness and obedience to all the divine precepts. We cannot expect that our prayers should be answered, and should have the divine approbation, unless we preserve a good and pious disposition of mind, and endeavour to be holy in all manner of conversation ; if we go on in a course of sin against God,

we

we may well think he will not hear our prayer ; if we neglect to obey his righteous precepts, and refuse to walk in his ways, it is but reasonable and just that he should reject our petitions and disregard all our cries : but if we endeavour so to walk as to please God, he will also be pleased with our prayers, and we need not doubt but they will be accepted of him. God is the most holy Being, and to him only we must direct our prayers, and the way to have them answered is certainly *to be holy as he is holy*. So far is God from answering the prayers of the wicked, so far are the supplications of such persons from being acceptable or well-pleasing to him, that he is displeased and angry with them, when they pray unto him ; hence he tells the Jews, *Is. i. 15. When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, yea when ye make many prayers, I will not hear.* And the reason is assigned, *your hands are full of blood* : they were guilty of great cruelty and injustice, and defiled with abominable practices. Impurity, unrighteousness and sin are contrary to the very nature of God ; certainly then he cannot be pleased with those who follow such practices, and if he is displeased with them, he will not grant them their requests : but those who *eschew evil and do good*, who follow after holiness, piety, and charity, and obey the divine precepts, will have their prayers

SERM.  
V.



SERM. prayers accepted, and graciously answered,

V. for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers, tho' his face be against them that do evil. When we make our prayers to God, we should lift up holy hands to him, for if we regard iniquity in our heart, he will not hear us. If we pray to the divine Being, and do not at the same time love and follow after holiness, our prayers cannot be sincere ; for while we draw near to him in prayer, we, by sinning against him, remove our hearts far from him, and certainly without sincerity no duty is regarded and accepted of God ; for it is the heart that God respects in all the duties we perform to him, and therefore he denounces judgments upon the *Jews*, tho' they drew near to him with their mouth, and honoured him with their lips, because they removed their heart far from him, *Isa.* xxix. 13. That God regards only the prayers of the righteous, whilst he is displeased with, and rejects those of the wicked, is manifest from the nature of things, and from many places of holy scripture. If we consider the nature of things, we shall find, that as God is holy, he must necessarily be displeased with unholy and unrighteous practices, and consequently with those who follow them, and live in the exercise of them ; and if so, it cannot be that he should be pleased with any of the addresses of such persons,  
and

and consequently their prayers will not be regarded ; and then, as it is most reasonable and just that we should obey the commands of God, he will certainly be just in denying the petitions of those who refuse to obey them ; but as holiness and righteousness is agreeable to the divine will and law, they will certainly have the divine approbation who live a holy and righteous life, and consequently their prayers will be accepted. This is also plain from holy writ : The Psalmist says, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*, Psal. lxvi. 18. And we are told, *Prov. x. 24. that the desire of the righteous shall be granted.* And in *Prov. xv. 8. we have both these together, The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight.* So in *ver. 29. The Lord is far from the wicked, but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.* And in *Prov. xxviii. 9. 'tis said, He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.* I will conclude this particular, by telling you, that if you would have your prayers answered, you must exercise the duty of forgiving one another ; and this I mention particularly, because our Saviour has so particularly and strictly enjoined it, and has assured us, that the prayers for the forgiveness of our sins will not be heard without it, as in *Mark xi. 25, 26. And when ye stand, praying, forgive,*  
if

SERM.  
V.

SERM. *if you have ought against any ; that your Fa-*  
 V. *ther also which is in heaven may forgive you*  
 { *your trespasses ; but if you do not forgive, nei-*  
*ther will your Father which is in heaven for-*  
*give your trespasses.*

2. If we would have our prayers accepted, they must be joined with faith, or a true belief of the divine promises. The promises of God, which all result from his goodness, are the foundation of our prayers, for the subject of prayer ought to be that which is agreeable to his will ; which tho' it be known but in part from the light of nature, is fully revealed in the holy scriptures, and contained in those divine promises therein made. The promises that relate to this life are more general, relate not so much to particular cases, and give us to understand little more, than *that all things shall work together for good to them that love God*, which is indeed sufficient ; but the promises of blessings relating to the life to come are more particular and express ; and therefore, when we pray for any particular thing relating to this life, it is proper that we should ask it with submission to God's will, or with this condition, *viz.* if it be according to his will, because we know not the will of God with respect to such a particular case ; but if we pray for the blessings of the world to come, such as the forgiveness of our sins, sanctification, eternal life, and the like, we may ask them absolutely, or without

out adding any such condition, because we SERM.  
 know from the word of God, that these V.  
 things are agreeable to his will. Seeing there-  
 fore that God has made these many great and  
 precious promises to us, it becomes us to ex-  
 ercise faith in them, and to have a firm de-  
 pendence on them, when we supplicate for  
 the blessings contained in them; for God re-  
 gards the prayers of those who believe his pro-  
 mises, and make them the ground of their  
 petitions; but the prayers of those who are  
 wavering and uncertain, are of little account:  
*As without faith it is impossible to please God,*  
*so unless our prayers are attended with faith,*  
*or a belief of the divine promises, they are*  
*not likely to be acceptable to him. The a-*  
*postle James's words are very observable to*  
*this purpose, chap. i. 5, 6, 7. If any of you*  
*lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth*  
*to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it*  
*shall be given him; but let him ask in faith,*  
*nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like*  
*a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and*  
*tossed; for let not that man think that he shall*  
*receive any thing of the Lord.*

3. If we would have our prayers accepted,  
 we must offer them up in the name of Christ.  
 Jesus Christ is the only mediator between  
 God and men; he came into the world to  
 die for us, that we might be justified by his  
 blood, and receive the remission of sins; and  
 he now appears in the presence of God for

H

us,



SERM. us, and makes continual intercession for us

V. at his right-hand ; and it is thro' him that  
 all our duties are accepted of God, and all  
 our prayers heard : Therefore, as we ought  
 to have respect to Christ for the acceptance  
 of all our religious performances, so more  
 particularly we ought to offer up prayers to  
 God in his name, that both those services of  
 ours may be accepted, and we may obtain  
 the blessings we pray for, and which are  
 purchased for us by Christ. God himself  
 testified of Christ, that he is his beloved Son,  
 in whom he is well pleased ; him he always  
 heard on earth, as he does now in hea-  
 ven, and he is constituted our head, and the  
 captain of our salvation ; we ought therefore  
 thro' him to present ourselves and all our re-  
 ligious services to God, and then we need not  
 doubt of their being accepted ; and as under the  
 dispensation of the gospel it is required, that  
 in all respects we worship God thro' Christ,  
 so it is agreeable to this dispensation to offer  
 up our prayers in his name, as our Saviour  
 directed his disciples a little before he left the  
 world, *John xvi. 23, 24. And in that day  
 ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily I say  
 unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in  
 my name, he will give it you : hitherto ye have  
 asked nothing in my name ; ask, and ye shall  
 receive, that your joy may be full. And, ver.  
 26. At that day ye shall ask in my name.*

III. I come now to shew, what we are SERM.  
to understand by *praying without ceasing*. V.

It would be ridiculous to understand hereby, that we should do nothing else but pray. But, 1. These words may intend, that we should always be in a disposition for prayer, and ready for the exercise of it on all occasions; that we should always have our hearts prepared for this duty, and be of such a frame and temper of mind as is necessary to it, and will put us upon the exercise of it in every condition and circumstance. We should always have a due sense of our manifold wants, the relation we stand in to God should always influence us, and engage us to the performance of this, as of all other duties, and a belief of the divine goodness, power and providence should ever impress our minds; we should walk humbly with God, should retain in our minds a sense of our dependence on him, and should alway have our expectation from him. We should be always prepared to call upon him, and to send up our desires to him in every condition and occurrence of life; in all difficulties, dangers, exigencies and afflictions, we should be ready to invoke his aid and direction, to supplicate his goodness, to deprecate his judgments, and to implore his salvation; and, finally, to make our prayers and supplications to him at all times, and upon all occasions: And this seems to be the meaning of watching un-

SERM. to prayer, which we are frequently exhorted to.  
V.

2. By these words, *Pray without ceasing*, we may understand, that we should persevere in this duty, and by nothing be discouraged from the exercise of it. Prayer is not to be made for some part of our life, and then to be left off and laid aside, but we should go on to call upon God, and should pray unto him as long as we live. We should take care, that after we have been zealous and diligent in the use of prayer for some time, we do not faint and grow weary of it; but we should be still placing our hopes in the divine promises, and stirring up and encouraging ourselves to constancy and perseverance in the practice of this duty. We should consider that we are here in a state of trial, and therefore, tho' things should sometimes not go very well with us, we ought still to trust in God, and depend upon his goodness, and in this trust and confidence to present our supplications to him. Tho' we may not presently receive the answer of our prayers, we should not let this discourage us, for God oftentimes defers the answer of them, to exercise our faith and patience, our trust in him, and dependence upon his promises. We should therefore consider, that God is good, and merciful, and faithful, and that all his promises are sure, and will in his due time be fulfilled; that so, tho' we may meet with many dark dif-

dispensations, we may notwithstanding be encouraged to hold on in this necessary and comfortable duty ; for thus we are exhorted to continue in prayer, or to persevere in it ; and we are told, *Luke xviii. 1.* that our Saviour spoke a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint, *i. e.* so to trust in God, and to depend upon his promises, as never to be discouraged from the exercise of prayer.

3. *We pray without ceasing*, when we keep up a course of prayer, and neglect not the ordinary performance of it. We ought not only to take care, that we do not wholly disuse prayer, but we should frequently, and as often as our affairs permit, call upon God, and commit our ways to him in prayer. There are indeed no set times certainly prescribed for prayer, neither will the various circumstances of persons admit of any certain rule in this affair ; but then we should make conscience of performing this duty as often as we can ; and as our wants are daily, and we have daily need of favour, succour and assistance from God, we should endeavour, if we can, to be found in the exercise of this duty every day ; and the morning and evening are certainly very proper seasons for this purpose. This practice of daily prayer is not without example in holy scripture. Thus *David*, *Psal. lv. 16, 17.* says, *As for me, I will call upon God : and the Lord shall save*

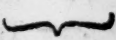


SERM. *me. Evening and morning, and at noon will*

V. *I pray and cry aloud, and he shall bear my voice.* And thus we are told, that *Daniel kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and give thanks before his Lord, as he did afore time, Dan. vi. 10.*

IV. I come now briefly to mention the reasons why we should thus be found in the exercise of this duty of prayer.

1. Prayer is a moral duty, and expressly commanded in the word of God. There are some things commanded in the divine word, that are not of a moral nature, and these we should by no means be obliged to, if they had not been thus commanded; but the moral duties that are thus recommended to us in the holy scriptures, we should be indispensibly obliged to perform, if they were not expressly commanded by God, for such duties as are founded on reason, are known by the light of nature, and result from the nature of things. To worship God is certainly a moral duty, and not only the worship of God in general is taught us by the light of nature, but the several parts of his worship may fairly be deduced from thence; and hereby we are taught, that prayer is a part of the worship we owe to God; for, as he is our all-sufficient and bountiful Creator, and we are creatures dependent on him, we ought certainly to look for him for all things we want, and consequently to pray unto him  
for

for the bestowing of them : This therefore SERM.  
being a moral duty, we are necessarily oblig- V.  
ed, all of us, to be found in the practice of   
it ; as we are also, upon the account of its  
being expressly enjoined in the word of God.

2. We should *pray without ceasing*, because  
we are in continual need of blessings from  
God, and prayer is the way to obtain them.  
Whatever we enjoy, we cannot properly call  
our own, for as we receive all we enjoy at the  
hands of God, so he can deprive us of it  
when it pleases him ; and we not only de-  
pend upon God for the continuance of the  
blessings we enjoy, but we are in daily want  
of many favours from him, we need his di-  
rection, his assistance, and his blessing at all  
times in the affairs of this life, and things re-  
lating to our bodies, and we depend on him  
for the reception of all spiritual good ; and  
this being so, we have continual occasion, not  
only to pray to him for the securing to us the  
things we already enjoy, but also for the be-  
stowing of such good things as we actually  
want. Thus, as we are daily exposed to  
temptations, we should daily pray for strength  
and deliverance ; and as we often sin against  
God, so we should continually address him  
for pardon and forgiveness. And if we thus  
implore the divine goodness for the things  
we always want, it is certainly the way to  
obtain them ; according to many divine pro-  
mises, particularly, *Psal. l. 15. Call upon me*

SERM. *in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and*

V. *thou shalt glorify me.* And very suitable to

— this purpose are the words of our Saviour, *Mat. vii. 7—11. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.* And, ver.

11. *If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

3. We should keep up the exercise of prayer, because it will be a means of preserving the life of religion, and maintaining holy habits and affections. Those who neglect the practice of this duty will infallibly become indifferent and careless in the matters of religion, and will, in time be very little disposed to piety, and have little or no heart to the exercise of all other religious duties. Those who thus forsake God, by neglecting to call upon him, are very likely to be forsaken of him, and so liable to depart from him in all other respects. Prayer being a moral duty, as well as commanded in the divine word, a bad conscience, and bad dispositions of mind seem to be the necessary effects of the neglect of it. But, on the contrary, if any one be diligent and constant in the use of prayer, he will by degrees gain much life and vigour in the ways of God; while

## Obligation of Prayer.

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while he prays to the divine Being, he will have his mind impressed with an awful sense of his greatness and sovereignty, and of his dependence on him, and subjection to him; his trust in God, and hope in his divine promises will be revived and strengthened, and he will by this means, in habituating himself to the exercise of this duty, have all holy habits and devout sensations of mind kept up and increased, and be readily disposed to the practice of every good work. Thus have I briefly gone through what I proposed to consider; and now, for a conclusion, I shall only add a brief exhortation to this duty.

We have seen what obligations we are under to the performance of this duty of prayer, and of what great advantage the exercise thereof will be to us: Let us therefore, as many of us as have been negligent in this respect, be exhorted to apply ourselves with sincerity to call on God; and those of us who have used ourselves to the practice of this duty, let us take care that nothing may cause us to leave off this holy duty; but as God is so good and gracious to us, as not only to permit us, who are sinners, but also to encourage us to pray unto him, and as prayer is a moral duty which is taught us by the light of nature, let us not be so ungrateful, let us not be so wicked, as wholly to neglect it; but let us supplicate the divine goodness for ourselves and others; let us with resignation

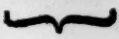
SERM.

V.



SERM. tion to the will of God ask the blessings of

V. this life at his hand, and let us with confidence, and from a firm belief of the divine promises, pray to him for the blessings that pertain to the life to come; let us often, and upon every occasion, be lifting our hearts to God, and, as frequent as we can, set apart some time for solemn prayer; let us be ready to join in *publick prayer*, let us pray in our families, and above all make conscience of secret prayer; and let us not pursue this course for some time, and then grow weary and leave it off, but let us imitate *Cornelius*, who prayed to God always; let us ever be disposed to this duty, and persevere in the practice of it; and above all, let us maintain such a conversation, and lead such a life, as will render our prayers acceptable unto God; let us abstain from sin, and follow after holiness and righteousness; if we pray to God, and at other times take liberty to profane his name, can we think that our prayers will be grateful to him? Will he, who is altogether holy and pure, take notice of their petitions, who allow themselves in wanton and impure practices? and have we any reason to expect that God will favour us in granting our requests, if we are unrighteous and uncharitable, and neglect to love and do good one to another? Or can we pray sincerely for others, as we ought, whilst we want a charitable and forgiving temper of mind? Let us therefore,  
from

from a due consideration of these things, be SERM.  
induced to apply ourselves to the practice of V.  
all good works, and then we shall approve   
ourselves sincere in calling upon God. Let  
us lift up holy hands unto him; let us pray  
in faith, and offer up our petitions in the  
name of Christ, and then our prayers will be  
accepted, and will be answered so far forth  
as will be for our good in this life, and will  
at last, as all other good works, be gracious-  
ly rewarded by him, *who is the rewarder of  
all those that diligently seek him.*

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## S E R M O N VI.

The Loveliness and Efficacy of Charity.

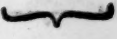
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I COR. xiii. 4—7.

*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Bear-eth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

SERM.  
VI.

**T**HE apostle is here describing a temper and disposition of mind which is frequently recommended in the gospel, which becomes all men, and which all christians especially, ought to endeavour to maintain, to wit, a sincere good-will and unfeigned love and affection towards one another, and to all mankind, which is here signified by the word *charity*. He recounts several of the properties, and genuine effects of this

this virtue, to which all its other properties SERM.  
may be reduced, whereby the excellency and VI.  
reasonableness of it most plainly appear. 

Before we consider these properties, it may not be amiss briefly to shew the particular occasion of the apostle's treating of this christian duty in this place, and how what he here says stands with the rest of his discourse. We must know then, that besides other differences in this church of *Corinth*, they fell out one with another about the use and exercise of their spiritual gifts in their assemblies, one contending that his ought to have the preference and precedence, and another his. This was the occasion of great disorders amongst them, and tended to create ill-will and resentment in their minds one against another, contrary to that christian charity which they were obliged by the gospel to preserve inviolable; as it should seem by that exhortation in *chap. xiv. 20.* where, treating of this their difference, the apostle says, *Brethren, be not children in understanding: Howbeit, in malice, be ye children, but in understanding be men.* The apostle begins his discourse upon this subject of their difference, *viz.* the use of their spiritual gifts, with the *12th chap.* and continues it to the end of the *14th.* He in the *12th* uses several arguments to convince them of the unreasonableness of their emulation and strife in this affair, and to bring them to a better temper



SERM. per of mind ; as that they were at first all

VI. alike idolaters, one no better than another ;

and that now they were alike spiritual men, having all believed in Christ, and owned him, which could not be done but by means of the spirit of God : That all those various gifts were of one and the same spirit, by the same Lord, and wrought in them by the same God, who worketh all in all ; and that they were given only for the edification of the church, and not to be an occasion of strife and contention about superiority and precedence on the account of them ; and so they were all useful and necessary in their place, as the various members of the body were all necessary to the several distinct functions in it. In the last *verse* of the *chapter*, he exhorts them to covet earnestly the best gifts, which may tend most to the advantage and edification of others ; or, as some understand it, he blames them for the strife and emulation that was among them about their several gifts ; reading it thus, *But ye covet earnestly the best gifts*, or contend one with another whose particular gift is best, and should have the preference ; *and yet*, says he, *I shew unto you a more excellent way* ; a way that will infallibly tend to your own and others good and edification, much more than the gifts you so earnestly contest about, which are of no value if this excellent thing be wanting. He proceeds in the 13th *chap.* to set

## Efficacy of Charity.

III

set before them this most excellent way, to S E R M.  
 wit, charity, or sincere and unfeigned love VI.  
 and good-will one towards another, and be-  
 gins with shewing the absolute necessity of  
 it : *Tho' I speak with the tongues of men and  
 angels, and have not charity, I am become as  
 sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And  
 tho' I have the gift of prophecy, and under-  
 stand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and tho'  
 I have all faith, so that I could remove moun-  
 tains, and have not charity, I am nothing.  
 And tho' I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,  
 and tho' I give my body to be burned, and have  
 not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* The a-  
 postle here reckons up the things that were  
 most highly esteemed among the *Jews*, and  
 asserts they are all nothing worth without  
 charity. They spoke of some of their wise  
 men as understanding the language of the  
 angels, or as being most eloquent, or as  
 rooters up of mountains, by which they  
 meant doing great and difficult things, or sol-  
 ving high and difficult questions ; prophecy  
 was in very great esteem with them, and they  
 held that alms-giving (which might proceed  
 from a desire of vain glory, or other mean  
 motives) delivered men from hell, and that  
 martyrdom for the law atton'd not only for  
 their own sins, but even for the sins of the  
 whole nation : But the apostle declares all  
 these things to be nothing without charity.  
 The apostle, having shewn the necessity of  
 charity,

SERM. charity, goes on in the words of our text, to

VI. describe it by its properties and effects, some of which seem to be tacitly opposed to the contrary temper that had too much prevailed among the *Corinthians*, and afterwards says, *that it never faileth*; whereas the gifts of tongues and prophecy, and the like, would hereafter cease, and give way to a more perfect state; and in the last *verse* he gives it the preference even to faith and hope: *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.* In the 14th chapter he exhorts them, *seeing they were zealous of spiritual gifts, to seek to excel to the edifying of the church*, and prefers prophecy before speaking with tongues, and in the end gives them some directions for regulating the exercise of those gifts in their publick assemblies. And thus we have seen the order and connexion of this discourse of the apostle's, which is contained in these three chapters, and how his description of charity is introduced; which excellent and comprehensive virtue we come now to consider: And shall,

I. Say something to the several properties of it here mentioned by the apostle.

II. Recommend it, as here described, to the study and pursuit of all christians.

I. It may be requisite to enlarge a little upon the several properties of this virtue of charity,

## Efficacy of Charity.

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charity, this mutual good-will, love and affection. 1. *It suffers long.* 2. *Is kind.* 3. *Envieth not.* 4. *Vaunteth not itself, nor is puffed up.* 5. *Behaves not itself unseemly.* 6. *Seeketh not her own.* 7. *Is not easily provoked.* 8. *Thinketh no evil.* 9. *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.* 10. *Bear-eth all things; or, as it should be rendered, covereth, or concealeth all things.* 11. *Believeth all things.* 12. *Hopeth all things.* 13. *Endureth all things.*

1st, *Charity suffereth long*, bears injuries patiently, forbearing those who do them; is not forward to render evil for evil, to revenge any affront, or to exact just punishment for a crime; but disposes us to put up wrongs, to forgive those who offend us, to pass by indignities offered to us, and to bear with the follies and weaknesses of men. They who are possessed of charity are of a forbearing and forgiving temper; are far from retaliating or meditating any revenge; are not soon transported into resentment, and will seem a great while to take but little notice of those things which others would presently seek satisfaction for. Charity makes men forgetful of injuries, and slow to demand reparation, and disposes them to deal tenderly with them from whom they suffer the greatest abuses and wrongs. I need not tell you that I am not speaking of the behaviour of nations one towards another, which christianity concerns

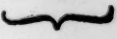
I

not



SERM. not itself with, but of particular persons. The

VI. charitable man does not presently take all  
 advantages against his neighbour, nor molest  
 him for every little offence ; he does not exact all the satisfaction that the rigour of the law allows him, is not hasty by violent measures to recover his just debts, and does not presently break off friendship for the first fault. We are ready all of us to bear with, and forgive the miscarriages of those whom we heartily love : If therefore we are possessed of true christian charity, or a sincere affection to all men, we shall be disposed to overlook and pass by their offences and misdemeanours, and patiently to expect their amendment. Charity causeth us to endure provocations with much patience, before we conceive any displeasure against others ; it teaches us to suffer a great many wrongs and affronts, rather than proceed to extremities ; and when we have a necessity of righting ourselves, to do it without a spirit of revenge, malice and ill-will. Contrary to this long-suffering, which is one property of charity, is the temper of such as are hasty in their spirit, as *Solomon* speaks, who upon every little provocation think of nothing but revenge, and are impatient to recover their right, tho' with the destruction of those they have to do with ; as the servant in the parable, *Matt. xviii. lat. end.* tho' his lord had forgiven him ten thousand talents, yet  
 when

when he found one of his fellow servants, SERM.  
 who owed him but a hundred pence, he laid VI.  
 hands on him, took him by the throat,   
 would not stay an hour longer for his money, but cast the poor man into prison, notwithstanding he humbly entreated him to have patience with him, and he would pay him all the debt. But a truly charitable man exercises long-suffering, and is patient, and unwilling to use any severity against any, or to do any thing that that may seem harsh or rigid, if it can possibly be avoided. He gives men time to consider and bethink themselves, and is very loth to bring any trouble upon them. Christians are frequently exhorted to the exercise of this duty; it is one of the fruits of the spirit, on consideration of the forbearance and long-suffering of God towards us, and his having forgiven us; it should induce us to deal so with our fellow-creatures, *Eph. iv. 2. With all holiness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.* And, *Col. iii. 12, 13. Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another; and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

2dly, *Charity is kind, gentle, courteous, and benign, and makes men, as far as possible, useful to all.* They who are endowed

SERM. with it, are respectful, affable and conde-

VI. scending, are not sullen and ill-natured, four and morose, but of a sweet, kind and placable disposition. They carry it towards all with a becoming respect, and endeavour to oblige every one. Christian charity inspires men with sweetness of temper, and makes them mild, easy and tractable; it smooths the ruggedness of their natures, and removes that sourness of disposition and behaviour that makes persons uneasy and troublesome one to another. It was said of *Nabal*, that he was such a son of *Belial*, that a man could not speak with him; and there are many now who make great pretensions to religion, and yet are of such a froward, peevish, quarrellsome and churlish disposition, that there is no living with them: Nothing can please such persons, and one is afraid of having any thing to do with them: And, which is worse, religion itself is often made a pretence for such an uncivil and disrespectful temper and carriage. But the truly charitable man behaves himself kindly towards all, however they differ from him, is mild and friendly, gentle, respectful and courteous in his deportment, free, candid and ingenious in his behaviour, and demeans himself so, as not to be grievous or offensive to any. This gentleness, kindness and goodness, as it is a property of true charity, becomes all christians, and is what they ought to be possessed

possessed of, and to discover in their conver-  
 sation, as being entirely agreeable to the tem-  
 per and spirit of the gospel. Gentleness or  
 kindness is one of the fruits of the spirit,  
 mentioned, *Gal. v. 22.* and what we are fre-  
 quently exhorted to ; particularly, *Eph. iv. ult.*  
*And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted.*  
 And in the forementioned *Col. iii. ver. 12.*  
*Put on therefore bowels of mercies, kindness, &c.*

3dly, *Charity envieth not* ; grudgeth not at  
 the happiness and prosperity of others, is not  
 troubled and uneasy at it, but on the contrary  
 is well pleased with it. The envious man  
 repines at another's good, and thinks himself  
 miserable, because his neighbour is happy.  
 He would engross all good things to himself,  
 or would have none partake of them but  
 himself, and particular friends of his own.  
 He is uneasy, and thinks himself hardly dealt  
 with, if any thing goes besides him, or any  
 one enjoys something which he has not. But  
 on the contrary, the charitable man rejoiceth  
 in the happiness of others, and it is a sensible  
 pleasure to him, that his neighbour thrives  
 and does well. As he weeps with them that  
 weep, so he rejoiceth with them who re-  
 joice. He does not murmur and repine at  
 another's welfare, but is pleased with it, as  
 being what he wishes with all his heart. He  
 looks upon it as one great part of his happi-  
 ness that others are happy ; and it adds very  
 much to his own satisfaction and content-



SERM. ment to see other men easy and satisfied. He

VI. would not monopolize the blessings of heaven, but is glad when his neighbours share therein. He would not have any good thing confin'd to himself, but desires that others may enjoy the like. 'Tis a sensible trouble to him when any one is destitute of the comforts he partakes of; and it very much allays his trouble for the want of any thing he stands in need of, when other people have the happiness of enjoying it. This is the temper and disposition of a truly charitable man, for *charity envieth not*. The christian religion, which contains the law of charity, teaches us to rejoice in the happiness and welfare of others, and forbids all envyings against them, 1 Pet. ii. 1. *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil-speakings.* Gal. v. ult. *Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.*

4thly, *Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up*; which I join together, because of their near signification in our translation. *Vaunteth not itself*; it may be rendered, doth not behave itself rashly; is not rash, heady, or precipitate in speaking of, or acting towards others; but is wary and considerate in this affair, and uses deliberation as in a matter of the greatest moment. But, to follow our translation, *charity vaunteth not itself*, is not insolent, assuming and domineering, does

not arrogantly impose on others, nor imperiously dictate to them, as if we only were worthy to be regarded; but is modest and governable, and easy to be persuaded, and willing to yield to others when it sees they have reason on their side. This vaunting, and foolish, and giddy elation of mind, is the cause of manifold disturbances in the world, and in the church, when men fondly take upon themselves to prescribe to others, and arrogantly set up their opinions as a standard for every body else. But charity does not thus vaunt itself; nor, as it follows, *is it puffed up*. Pride and haughtiness proceeding from a too great opinion of ourselves, causes us to slight and despise all others, which is certainly contrary to true charity. Proud persons so admire themselves, and their own imagined perfections, that they look down upon all the world with contempt, and can see no excellency in any but themselves: Hence they are apt deeply to resent the least seeming disrespect shewed to them, and are angry if every one does not esteem them according to the high opinion they have of themselves. But love or charity makes us humble and lowly-minded, teaching us to put a due value upon the endowments and accomplishments of others, and not to magnify ourselves, or to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think soberly. Humility is an

I 4                      inseparable

SERM.  
VI.

SERM. inseparable property of true charity, and  
 VI. therefore is frequently joined with it, in the  
 apostle's exhortations, particularly in the  
 forecited passage in *Col. iii. 12.* *Put on therefore (as the elect of God, &c.) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering:* And in the forementioned *Eph. iv. 2.* *With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.* There can be no true charity without humility, and the charitable man, who is truly so, is always a humble man. *Charity is not puffed up.*

5thly, *Charity behaves not itself unseemly;* never treats others rudely in words or actions, nor permits us to reproach or vilify them. It gives no abusive or contumelious language, nor endeavours to disparage or defame any. It can refute the errors of those whom we differ from, without any opprobrious or disgraceful reflections, and answer their arguments, and shew that they are in the wrong, without reviling their persons, or calling them names. This it will by no means do; it will give no needless provocation, and as it will do no evil to others, so neither will it speak evil of them. It will behave itself respectfully and in a becoming manner towards all, without any ill-natured actions, or bitter revilings. It teaches us to put away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour,  
 and

## Efficacy of Charity.

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and evil-speaking, and to avoid all virulent SERM.  
 railing and severe reflections; for *it behoves* VI.  
*not itself unseemly* towards any in words   
 or actions.

6thly, *Charity seeketh not her own*; inclines us to have a sincere regard to the good and welfare of others, and not merely to mind our own profit or advantage. A charitable man is not selfish, stingy and narrow-spirited, caring for none but himself, and regarding not how it fares with other men, so he does but live in ease and plenty; but as he desires, so he does all he can to promote the welfare of others: He exercises bounty and liberality, if it be in his power, and as he has opportunity does good to all men. He does good to others, though thereby he receive not the least advantage to himself, besides the pleasure of doing it. Christian charity obliges us to be kind and beneficent even to the unthankful and the evil, and to the poor who are unable to make any returns: It teaches us *to lend hoping for nothing again*, nay, *to do good to those who return evil for it*, and to pursue the benefit and edification of others, though with some loss to ourselves. We should not please ourselves in gratifying our own appetites and passions to another's prejudice, but rather should please our neighbour for his good to edification, and should not look every one on his own things only, but  
 every



SERM. every man also on the things of others ; for

VI. this is the mind which was in Christ Jesus, who emptied himself, and laid aside his glory, and suffered even the death of the cross for the good of mankind.

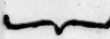
7thly, *Charity is not easily provoked* ; does not soon fall into a violent fit of anger, is not highly exasperated, and breaks not out into furious and ungovernable passions on any occasion. Charity's suffering long, does especially respect revenge ; but this that *it is not easily provoked*, respects the passion of anger, which charity teaches us to regulate and govern, so as that, in the first place, we may not be suddenly inflamed upon every slight fault of our brother, may not be easily angered upon every trivial occasion ; but may be slow to anger, and abstain from wrath, as much as we can. A charitable man is not apt to pick quarrels or to fall into a passion upon every little occasion ; but is so easy in his carriage, that it is no hard matter for a man to live with him, without ever offending him. We have but little love for those whom we cannot at all bear with ; and if we are transported with passion and resentment, upon every little slip or miscarriage, it is a sign our charity is very defective.

When we have just occasion of offence given us, charity will not suffer us to fall into immoderate passion, or to  
be

be transported by blind rage and fury; be- SERM.  
yond the bounds of reason and religion. VI.

Our anger, how just soever, should never  
make us injure the person offending; it  
should never break out into fury, and we  
should never be so far exasperated, as to suf-  
fer our passion to betray us into any unrea-  
sonable and rash actions, or to hurry us into  
any indecency or excess: But we should  
ever study to keep this passion within the  
bounds of reason, so as to let that govern  
it, and then it will never transgress the li-  
mits of Charity.

8thly, *Charity thinketh no evil*; is not  
jealous or suspicious, does not endeavour to  
blast mens good actions and reputation, by  
imagining and surmising some secret evil, or  
bad design; but puts a favourable construc-  
tion upon every thing, and always judges the  
best. When a man falls into any vice, cha-  
rity, instead of aggravating the matter, will,  
if possible, find out excuses to lessen the ag-  
gravation. It will be so far from aggra-  
vating those injuries which our neighbour  
may have done us, that it will be ready to  
find out some charitable construction or  
other, and to devise some apology for him.  
It will not permit us to surmise or suspect  
that evil of others which we do not know;  
nor will it censure their miscarriages as done  
out of malice, or with ill intentions. Fi-  
nally; it never judgeth any man to be worse  
than

SERM. than the tenour and course of his visible actions declare him. But farther, perhaps  
 VI.  these words may be thus rendered, charity does not meditate, devise or design evil, to wit, against our neighbour. It is far from wronging or injuring any, or doing any thing to their disadvantage. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour*, Rom. xiii. 10.

The remaining properties of charity, I shall leave to another discourse, and shall conclude this, by briefly exhorting you to follow after the virtues we have been treating of, and to avoid the contrary vices. Let us *put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering*, and be disposed to further the welfare of all, and to do them good as we have opportunity: This is the true christian temper and practice, which will yield the highest satisfaction in this life, and will be a means of preparing us for eternal happiness in the next. Let us therefore avoid all those vices that are contrary to this heavenly and divine disposition, and lay aside all ungoverned anger, all judging and censuring, all clamour and evil-speaking, all pride and haughtiness and envy; and let us persevere in that excellent temper and practice we have been in part describing; that so being the followers of Christ here, we may at last *have an abundant entrance ministered to us into his everlasting kingdom*.

S E R M.

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# S E R M O N VII.

## The Loveliness and Efficacy of Charity.

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I COR. xiii. 4—7.

*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

IN treating on these words, I proposed, SERM.  
VII.

I. To say something to the several properties of charity here mentioned by the apostle.

II. To recommend it, as here described, to the study and pursuit of all christians.

By charity or love, the apostle means a sincere good-will or kind affection one towards another, or to all mankind. Indeed,  
he



SERM. he is here recommending mutual charity  
 VII. among christians, and pressing them, by all  
 this discourse, sincerely to love one another ;  
 but that this virtue in its true extent, is to  
 be referred to all men, so that we should  
 maintain good-will and a kind affection to-  
 wards all, is plain from what our Saviour  
 has taught us, to wit, that *we should love*  
*our neighbour as ourselves*, and that all men,  
 however they differ from us, are to be  
 esteemed our neighbours, so as that we  
 should have the same good-will towards all,  
 and the same readiness to do them good, as  
 the *Jews* had towards their neighbour, pro-  
 perly so called, or their brethren of the same  
 nation and religion. And the apostle *Paul*  
 expressly extends the virtue of charity to  
 all men, *1 Thess. iii. 12. And the Lord make*  
*you to increase and abound in love one towards*  
*another, and towards all men.* St. *Peter* al-  
 so, when he speaks of adding to *brotherly-*  
*kindness charity*, by the former means a sin-  
 cere love to all christians as christians, and  
 by the latter, an unfeigned affection and  
 good-will to all men as men. And indeed  
 all these properties of charity, or virtues  
 contained under it, here mentioned by the  
 apostle, are such as ought to be extended to all  
 men, and to be exercised towards all as there  
 is occasion, or we have opportunity. Some  
 of these virtues, as genuine fruits and true  
 properties of charity have been already con-  
 sidered ;

## Efficacy of Charity.

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sidered ; which I shall but briefly mention, SERM.  
and then proceed to the consideration of VII.  
those which remain.

1st. *Charity suffereth long.* They who are endued with it exercise long-suffering, are of a temper which inclines and disposes them to bear injuries patiently, and to forbear the authors of them ; are not of a fierce, hasty and revengeful disposition, apt to render evil for evil, to study retaliation or meditate revenge ; but are patient towards all, who have either injured them, or owe them any thing, and slow in proceeding to extremities ; had rather suffer a hundred evils than do one, are of a forbearing and forgiving temper, endeavour to *overcome evil with good*, to reclaim those who have discovered any ill-will towards them, by soft and kind methods, and bear with the weaknesses, oversights and indiscretions of mankind.

2dly, *Charity is kind.* They who are possessed of it, are kindly affectioned towards others, are of a mild, friendly, courteous, affable and respectful temper and carriage, and as far as possible, useful and beneficial to all.

3dly, *Charity envieth not ;* does not murmur and repine at the welfare of others, but on the contrary, is well pleased with it, rejoiceth with those who rejoice, and is glad when our neighbour thrives, or does well.

His

SERM. His happiness is an addition to ours, if we  
 VII. have true charity, and we are so far from  
 { grudging at his prosperity, that it is what  
 we most sincerely desire and wish for.

4thly, *Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.* It is not insolent, assuming and domineering, but modest and tractable, easy to be persuaded, and willing to yield to others, when it sees they have reason on their side. It is not proud, haughty and supercilious, which temper is altogether inconsistent with charity, forasmuch as it is always attended with contempt of others, undervaluing and despising them and their endowments, which must render a man incapable of expressing that kindness, love and respect to them, which true charity requires and includes; but charity is humble and lowly-minded, teaching us by having sober and modest thoughts of ourselves, duly to esteem others, and to put a just value on their endowments and qualifications. In lowliness of mind, we should *esteem each other better than ourselves*, so as to look on ourselves in the matter of charity, to be as it were their servants, and be as ready to help and assist them, as if we were their *subjects and servants*; for that cannot always refer to judgment, but to the temper of mind and the practice consequent on it.

5thly, *Charity behaves not itself unseemly*; never treats others rudely in words or actions.

It

It gives no abusive language, nor endeavours to disparage or defame any. It will give no needless provocation, and as it will do no evil to others, so neither will it speak evil of them. But it behaves itself civilly and respectfully towards all, without any base actions or bitter revilings. SERM. VII.

6thly, *Charity seeketh not her own.* It inclines men to have a sincere regard to the good and welfare of others, as well as to their own. They who are truly possessed of it, are not selfish, stingy and narrow-spirited, caring for none but themselves, and regarding not how it fares with other men, so that they do but live in ease and plenty; but as they heartily desire, so they do all they can to promote the welfare of others, being willing even to deny themselves, for the sake of a more publick good, and having the mind which was in Christ Jesus, who, for the good of mankind, *humiliated himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

7thly, *Charity is not easily provoked;* does not soon fall into a violent fit of anger, is not highly exasperated, and breaks not out into furious ungovernable passion on any occasion. Anger is frequently the cause of mens doing a great deal of mischief to others; if therefore we are possessed of true charity, and sincerely love all men, we shall be very careful how we fall into anger at



SERM. all, and when we receive any just provocation, shall endeavour so to govern our passion, that it may not transport us with blind rage and fury, beyond the bounds of reason and religion.

## VII.

8thly, *Charity thinketh no evil*, is not inclined to ill interpret, is not jealous or suspicious of other men, but puts a favourable construction on all their actions, and always judges the best. It is far from censuring and condemning others; it will not suffer us to surmise or suspect that evil of other men which we know nothing of; nor will it accuse them of erring thro' obstinacy, or censure their miscarriages as done out of malice or with ill intentions. In short, it never thinks amiss of a man for difference in opinion only, nor judges any one to be worse than his moral actions declare him.

I now proceed to consider the remaining properties of charity, which have not yet been spoken to, and are these following, *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things.*

In the 9th place therefore, *Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.* It rejoiceth not in iniquity, in any evil done to, much less by others; it suffers us not to be pleased with the evil actions of other men, or with any ill stories, or malicious insinuations concerning our neighbour. On the

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SERM.

VII.

contrary, a man endued with charity, is sensibly troubled when others do amiss, and it is a great grief to him to behold the sins and follies that are committed in the world. As he has a sincere regard to the temporal and eternal welfare of others, he is very sorry when by their wicked courses they endanger both the one and the other, and go the ready way to make themselves miserable, both here and in another state. It is a great affliction to him to consider the prevailing of vice in the world, whereby so much calamity and misery is introduced; and nothing troubles him more, than to see men acting so very contrary to their real and true interest. He is passionately affected with sorrow for other mens crimes, and is sensibly grieved to hear any thing amiss of his neighbour. But he *rejoices in the truth*, rejoices with others when they do well, when they live righteously, and obey God, and make conscience of their duty in every respect; truth being often used for righteousness, or the whole of our duty. The charitable man takes pleasure in the good actions of others, and delights to see them live virtuous and holy lives, express a sincere regard to the will of God, and act agreeable to the excellent faculties they are endued with. He rejoices when men do as they ought to do, and by the pursuit of virtue and goodness, take the right method to secure

SERM. their present and future happiness and comfort. VII. It is a sensible pleasure to him, to see men acting agreeable to their rational make, and christians living according to the gospel, which, by way of eminence, is called *the truth*. See 3 *John*, ver. 4. *I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in the truth*. So, 2 *Epist.* ver. 4. *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth*. Charity begets in us a complacency and inward pleasure to behold truth and righteousness, piety and goodness prevailing in the world, and to see men yielding obedience to the gospel of Christ. A charitable man bears company with the angelick host in their joy for the conversion of every sinner, and is sensibly pleased with those excellent qualities and dispositions he finds others endued with. How far then are they from charity, who like nothing better than to hear some bad story of their neighbour; who watch for others faults, divert themselves with their sins and failings, and curiously pry into mens actions, on purpose to discover some misdemeanours, that they may have the base and inhumane pleasure of proclaiming and divulging them. But,

10thly, *Charity beareth all things*. It had been more rightly rendered, *covereth*, or *concealeth all things*; i. e. it is not forward to rip up and lay open the faults of others, but disposed

posed to hide and conceal them. It chuses SERM.  
rather to cast a veil over the failings and im- VII.  
perfections of other men, than to publish and  
proclaim them. If we are possessed of true  
charity, it will incline and dispose us to con-  
ceal the evil we know of others, we shall  
not be of a forward, busy temper, so as need-  
lessly to reveal our neighbours faults, but shall  
labour by all means to hide and cover them,  
unless his own or others good makes the dis-  
covery of them necessary. Love, indeed, does  
not hinder us from warning and reproving  
those who are guilty of notorious crimes, but  
rather puts us upon it; but then we should  
do this privately between them and ourselves  
alone: Before others we should rather take  
notice of what is good and commendable in  
them, and we should avoid, as much as pos-  
sible, the speaking evil of any one behind his  
back. Charity obligeth us to make a favour-  
able representation of others, and to speak of  
them as much as possible to their advantage,  
to cover their failings, to hide their imper-  
fections, and to conceal their crimes, so far  
as is consistent with the safety and welfare of  
other men; and to take all opportunities to  
commend them, rather than needlessly to de-  
fame them, and speak all the evil we know  
of them. *Love hideth the multitude of sins.*  
How destitute are they then of true charity,  
who not only forwardly divulge their neigh-  
bours



SERM. bours faults and imperfections, but lay to  
 VII. their charge what they are nowise guilty of,  
 and make it their business to slander and  
 backbite them, to load them with calumny,  
 and insinuate all that is bad concerning them.

Firstly, *Charity believeth all things*; all the good it hears concerning others, or has the least probable ground for. It believes well of all so far as visible actions will permit, and never presumes to judge mens hearts, and pry into their secret intentions. We easily believe things to be as we before wish them to be; charity therefore being a wishing well to all men, must needs incline us to believe well of them too.

But, in the next place, *Charity hopeth all things*; disposes us to hope well concerning others, tho' their actions at present give us some ground to doubt. Charity inclines us still to hope the best concerning men's designs and intentions, tho' there may be some reason to question their truth and sincerity. When a man sins, charity hopes it is out of weakness, or surprize, or inadvertency, and not out of wilfulness, or a wicked disposition. And tho' our neighbour be at present bad, charity inclines us to hope for, and not to despair of his repentance, and of consequence to endeavour his amendment by all proper methods.

In the last place, *Charity endureth all things*; patiently bears with every thing, tho' grievous

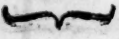
grievous to be borne, and perseveres notwithstanding in the exercise of those good offices which are proper effects of it. It will never be wearied or tired out, will never cease from being kind and well-affected to our brother, *by reason of any provocation whatsoever*. Love thinks nothing too much to do, nothing too hard to suffer for the good of others; nay it makes any duty or labour easy and pleasant; it easily surmounts all difficulties, and triumphs over all opposition: Tho' we meet with great ingratitude, and unworthy returns from those who have received any favour from us, yet love is not apt to repent of the good it hath done, but still perseveres, labouring to overcome evil with good.

This now is that charity, that love, goodwill and affection, which we ought to be possessed of, and to preserve one towards another, and towards all men. And having thus considered the several properties of it, let me now,

II. Briefly recommend this most excellent way to the study and pursuit of all christians; and so I shall conclude.

This charity, or loving affection and goodwill one towards another, is what all men ought to be possessed of; but all christians who enjoy the excellent revelation of the gospel, wherein this virtue is most earnestly recommended, and by the highest arguments

SERM. and motives inforced, are especially concern'd

VII. to maintain it, and to excel in it. And yet,  with grief be it spoken, scarce any body of men have been, and are more destitute of charity than the christians, tho' the primitive christians were indeed remarkable for it. What violence, oppression and persecution have christians practis'd one against another? What biting and devouring, what judging and censuring, what strife and envying, and falling out about bare opinions and speculations have there been among them; so that if men were to judge of christianity by the behaviour of the generality of its professors towards one another, and towards other men, they would be apt to esteem that which is in truth the best, the worst religion in the world? But I hope *we have not so learned Christ*; however, I shall beg leave at this time, in a few words, to recommend this virtue of charity to your constant care and practice.

This virtue is most excellent in itself, and most agreeable to reason and the nature of things. The loving of one another, and exercising of charity one towards another, is what the light of nature itself most strongly teaches, we being all made of one blood, having the same common nature, and being liable to the same common necessities. How reasonable and necessary is it that we should bear with and forgive others, and be kind, helpful

helpful and useful to others, when we our-  
selves stand in need of the same treatment. SERM. VII.

A cruel and uncharitable, a fierce, malicious and revengeful spirit, that cares not what mischief it does to others to gratify its own vicious temper, this, I say, debases our nature, sinks us beneath its original dignity, and makes us more like wild beasts than men; tho', as has been observed, lions do not devour lions, nor tygers tygers, but only those of a different species; whereas men of this temper persecute and devour one another. But charity, on the contrary, or a sincere love and good-will towards all, is a heavenly and divine disposition, enobles our nature, and raises us into a likeness with God, who is love, whose tender mercies are over all his works, and who is kind, and does good to all, even to the unthankful and the evil. In short, there is nothing more noble and generous than a universal love and good-will to all men; nothing more admirable than mildness, gentleness, and long-suffering; nothing more becoming than benignity and kindness; nothing more excellent and honourable than being useful to all as far as lies in our power. Besides, nothing tends more to procure respect and esteem amongst men, than a kind, gentle and condescending temper, that studies to oblige, and rejoices to do good. This temper will also yield our minds  
the



SERM. the highest satisfaction in this life, and will  
 VII. alone fit us for the heavenly state, where  
 perfect love and charity for ever dwell. But  
 more especially, that we may be induced to  
 follow after charity, and to increase and a-  
 bound in love one towards another, and to-  
 wards all men, let us consider how frequent-  
 ly, how particularly, and how strongly this  
 virtue is recommended to us in the gospel of  
 Christ, which is the rule that all christians  
 ought to walk by. Our Saviour, again and  
 again, commands it, and his apostles most  
 earnestly press and inculcate it. Our Lord  
 teaches us, that one of the two great com-  
 mandments of the law is this, *Thou shalt love*  
*thy neighbour as thyself*, Matt. xxii. 39. and  
 inforces charity to our enemies by the ex-  
 ample of our heavenly Father, chap. v. 44,  
 45. *But I say unto you, Love your enemies,*  
*blest them that curse you, do good to them that*  
*bate you, and pray for them who despitefully*  
*use you and persecute you ; that ye may be the*  
*children of your Father which is in heaven ;*  
*for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on*  
*the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on*  
*the unjust.* And, ver. ult. *Be ye therefore*  
*perfect, i. e. in kindness and goodness, even*  
*as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*  
 And St. John, by the same great example,  
 moves christians to love one another, 1 John  
 iv. 7, 8. *Beloved, let us love one another ; for*  
*love*

*love is of God, and every one that loveth, is* SERM.  
*born of God, and knoweth God. He that lo-* VII.  
*veth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.* 

Our Saviour also declares this love or charity one towards another to be the distinguishing badge of his disciples, at the same time that he expressly commands it, *John xiii. 34, 35. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* The love of God in Christ is likewise proposed as a pattern for our love, and as an inducement to it, *Eph. iv. ult. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* I *John iv. 11. Beloved, if God so loved us, as to send his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, we ought also to love one another.* The love of Christ also is set before us with this design, *Eph. v. 2. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.* *John xv. 12. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* The apostle Paul recommends this virtue in the strongest manner, *Col. iii. 14. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.* *Rom. xiii. 8. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for*  
 he

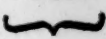
SERM. *he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

VII. And, *ver. 10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

And in the last verse of the chapter, wherein is our text, he gives it the preference to faith and hope: *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.* The several particular virtues which charity takes in, and are here mentioned as properties of it, are also very frequently recommended, and strictly enjoined by Christ and his apostles. We are told in the gospel, that *if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our heavenly Father forgive us*; and that *we should not judge lest we be judged, nor condemn lest we be condemned, and the like.* Thus then we see how much christians are concerned to follow after christianity; and that we may be thoroughly convinced of the absolute necessity of it, let us once more consider what the apostle says at the beginning of the chapter, with which I shall conclude; *Tho', says he, I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And tho' I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and tho' I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing. And tho' I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, (out of vain glory, or superstition, or the like)*  
and

## Efficacy of Charity.

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*and tho' I give my body to be burned, or die a* **SERM.**  
*martyr for religion, (which was reckoned* **VII.**  
*the highest immediate expression of regard*   
*to God) tho' I do all this, and have not cha-*  
*rity, a sincere good-will, and unfeigned af-*  
*fection or love to all mankind, it profiteth me*  
*nothing.*

**SER-**



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## SERMON VIII.

Humility and Meekness Christian  
Virtues.

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MATT. v. 3.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the  
kingdom of heaven.*

SERM. **THE** design of our Saviour's preaching  
VIII. **W**as to reform the hearts of men, and  
correct the internal disposition of their minds,  
and by that means to amend their practice,  
and rectify their outward actions. He knew  
that if the tree was good, its fruit would al-  
so be good, and if the tree was corrupt, its  
fruit would be corrupt; and therefore that  
men might bring forth the fruit of good  
works, of a virtuous and holy conversation,  
he exhorts them to become really good, and  
to have their very minds reformed. He tells  
us, that out of the heart proceeds all manner  
of wickedness, and suggests, that we should  
purge the heart from all corrupt desires and  
perverse inclinations, and aim at sincerity and  
purity

purity there, that so the heart being honest and good, we might out of the good treasure of it bring forth good things, as an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, brings forth evil things. Thus, in this excellent sermon on the mount, our Saviour frequently intimates, that we should have an especial regard to the heart, and be very watchful over it; he teaches sincere piety and righteousness as flowing from thence, making it the seat of all virtue and goodness, and the spring and fountain of all good actions, and a holy life and conversation; and plainly enough suggests thro' the whole, according to *Solomon's* advice, that we should

SERM.  
VIII.

*keep our hearts with all diligence, seeing out of them are the issues of life.* And moreover he informs us, that whatever good things we do, they will by no means be acceptable to God, nor meet with his approbation, unless they are performed in sincerity, *i. e.* from the heart. Accordingly he begins this his most admirable discourse, wherein he gives us, as it were, a transcript of the law of nature, and lays down the chief laws of his kingdom; he begins it, I say, with recommending to his disciples and followers suitable dispositions, and holy and regular habits of mind. Our text is the first of these eight aphorisms, or, as they are commonly called, beatitudes, which stand at the head of this sermon, and are, I doubt not, well known to all

SERM. all of you, wherein he pronounces those blef-

VIII. sed or happy, who are poor in spirit, who  
 { mourn, and are truly sorry for their sins, who are of a mild and meek disposition, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, or are truly inclined, and are earnestly desirous to be good and virtuous in their whole conversation, who love mercy, and whose temper of mind most strongly inclines them to merciful actions, who are pure in heart, are peace-makers, and are persecuted for righteousness sake. Here we may observe, that as most of these aphorisms must be supposed to refer primarily to the temper and disposition of the mind, from whence suitable actions will necessarily flow; so the sixth does expressly relate thereto, *Blessed are the pure in heart*, as does also our text, which is the first sentence in our Lord's sermon, as well as the first of these aphorisms, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. And what good reason our Lord had to place this first, we shall see hereafter.

The words naturally lead us to consider,

I. The character of the persons who are pronounced blessed, *The poor in spirit*.

II. Wherein their blessedness consists, *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*.

I. We are to consider and explain the character of the persons whom our Lord here

here pronounces blessed; *blessed are the poor in spirit.* SERM. VIII.

The addition of the words *in spirit*, plainly shews that we are not to understand this of the state and condition of persons with regard to our outward circumstances, but, as has been already observed, of the temper and disposition of their minds: And what this temper and disposition is, will be best seen, by comparing this phrase, *poor in spirit*, with the same or like phrases in other places of scripture, and chiefly in the old Testament, from whence this expression seems to be taken. We have the very same phrase, only with the addition of some other words, in *Isa. lxvi. 2.* I shall begin with the first *ver.* Thus saith the Lord, *The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?* Then it follows, *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.* It will be proper to observe here, that tho' in our translation the word *poor* be disjoined from *spirit*, and seems not to relate to it, yet it may be read thus, *to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit*; or, *to the poor and contrite in spirit*, joining *poor* as well as *contrite* with *spirit*, and so we have the phrase exactly as in our text, only the word *contrite*

L joined



SERM. joined with it. Now, by the *poor and contrite in spirit* in this place, it is pretty plain

we are to understand one who is *mean* and low in his own eyes, and of a penitent and submissive disposition ; and particularly, by *poor in spirit*, one of a truly humble mind. And this will very fully appear from the parallel place, *Isa. lvii. 15. For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, or is contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* Here we have *contrite in spirit*, as in the forecited passage, and *humble in spirit* plainly answers to *poor in spirit*. The like phrase we have in *Prov. xvi. 19. Better is it to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.* And, *Prov. xxix. 23. A man's pride shall bring him low, but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.* This also is the usual expression whereby the Jewish writers represent the humble man, viz. that he is *poor, low, or contrite in his spirit*. Accordingly they have these sayings, *Be thou humble in spirit towards all men : He that is humble, or poor in spirit is worthy of honour, and the Holy Ghost will rest upon him : And, Great are the humble, or poor in spirit in the sight of God.* Thus then by *poor in spirit* in the old Testament and the Jewish writers,

writers, we are to understand one of a truly SERM.  
 humble and lowly spirit, who is not confi- VIII.  
 dent and presumptuous, not proud and  
 haughty, arrogant and ambitious, not self-  
 conceited nor high-minded, nor of a world-  
 ly, vain-glorious, aspiring temper; not puffed  
 up, whatever his circumstances or abilities  
 are, but modest in his opinion of himself,  
 and low in his own eyes, and humble in  
 heart towards God, and towards all men.  
 And no doubt but such persons are meant by  
 the *poor in spirit* in our text, it being a *He-*  
*brew* phrase, and very likely taken by our  
 Saviour from the old Testament. And thus  
 also both the *Greek* and *Latin* fathers under-  
 stood it. The *papists* sense of these words  
 hardly deserves to be mentioned, that by the  
*poor in spirit* are to be understood such as vo-  
 luntarily quit their riches and possessions, and  
 chuse a state of poverty for the freer exercise  
 of their religion, as some monks and hermits  
 formerly did, and as the begging friars of  
 that communion pretend now to do; for  
 certainly all who would partake of the blef-  
 sedness mentioned in our text, are indispen-  
 sably concerned to be in some measure poor  
 in spirit, but the *papists* will not say that all  
 christians are obliged to turn mendicants for  
 that end; for then all other catholicks must  
 be excluded the kingdom of heaven. And  
 that we are not here to understand the poor,  
 properly so called, appears not only from the

SERM. addition of the words *in spirit*, as we before  
 VIII. observed, but also from hence, that the *poor*  
 here spoken of are actually pronounced *blef-*  
*sed*, because *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*,  
 which is not true of all those who are poor  
 in a proper sense, or are destitute of riches  
 and worldly possessions, many, and as it is  
 to be feared the greatest part of them, being  
 of such a disposition, and leading such lives,  
 as render them unfit to enter into the king-  
 dom of God. Besides, if the poor in tem-  
 porals were here meant, the rich who did  
 not forsake their possessions, would seem to  
 be excluded from the kingdom of heaven;  
 whereas St. *Paul* only requires them not to  
 be high minded, nor trust in their wealth,  
 but in the living God, and to be rich in good  
 works, in order to their laying hold on eter-  
 nal life. Indeed, there are many gracious  
 declarations in the word of God to the poor  
 of this world for their comfort and support,  
 but then they belong only to those of them  
 who are also poor in spirit, who love God,  
 and keep his commandments, and behave  
 themselves suitably to the condition they are  
 in. It may be said, that our Saviour, in the  
 place parallel to our text, *Luke vi. 20.* omits  
 the words *in spirit*, when he says, *Blessed be*  
*ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God*; but  
 here we are either to understand the poor in  
 spirit, or such as patiently endured poverty,  
 or the loss of all things for the sake of Christ;  
 for

for these words are immediately directed to the disciples. This phrase is no where else to be found in the new Testament, but there is one very near akin to it, and of much the same signification; it is in *Matt. xi. 29.* where our Lord says, *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; lowly in heart.* This passage may farther confirm the sense we have given of the expression in our text; for as the word here translated *lowly* does, when used by itself, signify one who is poor, and in low, mean, and afflicted circumstances in the world; as for instance, *James i. 9. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted;* where the word certainly relates to a person's state and condition, but when joined with the words *in heart, lowly in heart*, it signifies one of a truly humble mind and disposition; so the word translated *poor* does, when alone, signify one in a poor and mean condition with respect to the things of this world; yet, when the words *in spirit* are added to it, we are undoubtedly to understand thereby one of a humble and lowly spirit. Thus, I think, I have sufficiently shewn the meaning of this expression, *poor in spirit*, and that our Saviour intends thereby those who are of a truly humble, modest and lowly disposition: I would adjoin to what has been said, that the *poor in spirit* may also signify those who set light by the riches and possessions of this world,



SERM. world, have a mean regard to them, and a

VIII. low opinion of them, and are far from trusting to them, from setting their hearts upon them, or placing their happiness in them. And this, and the sense we before gave, may very well stand together.

Having thus considered the proper import of this phrase, I shall now more particularly treat of the temper of mind expressed therein.

- I. As it includes our humility with regard to the divine Being.
- II. As opposed to self-conceit, and a high opinion of ourselves on any account.
- III. As opposed to ambition, and aspiring after honour, dignity and power amongst men.
- IV. As opposed to an inordinate love of wealth and worldly possessions.

I. We may consider this character, *poor in spirit*, as it regards our humble and lowly deportment towards the divine Being. As humility in our whole carriage is required of us, so it is necessary we should humble ourselves before God, and have low and abasing thoughts of ourselves in his presence, or whenever we consider ourselves with relation to him. We should always be deeply sensible of our manifold sins against him, and our great unworthiness to receive good things  
at

at his hands, and should be truly humbled SERM.  
 in a sense thereof. We should confess and VIII.  
 acknowledge our transgressions against the Lord, should take shame to ourselves on that account, and should with the utmost humility ascribe it to his mercy that we are not consumed. We should humbly beg pardon of him for all our iniquities, and with the most lowly devotion of mind should implore the forgiveness of them. The penitent publican in the parable does truly represent one who is poor in spirit, *Luke xviii. 13. And the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.* As we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and in many things we all offend, this should be matter of great abasement to us, and should cause us to humble ourselves before that God whose laws we have broken, whose honour we have violated, and whose favour we have justly forfeited; we should confess with the greatest abhorrence of ourselves, that we have sinned against heaven, and in his sight, and have thereby rendered ourselves unworthy of the least of his mercies. We should take care that we have not so high an opinion of our own righteousness, as to forget we have in many things come short of our duty, and done those things which we ought not to have done; but the sense of our great unworthiness,

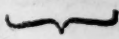
SERM. worthiness, and of our manifold sins and  
 VIII. failings, should always be matter of great  
 ~~~~~ humility to us, and make us lay ourselves  
 low in the sight of God. And as we should
 humble ourselves before God in a sense of
 our sins, so we should always be sensible of
 our necessary dependence on him for our ve-
 ry being, and every thing we enjoy; we
 should look upon ourselves as nothing with-
 out him, and as miserable without his fa-
 vour; as he is the sole giver of all good, and
 the only source of all happiness; in all the
 comforts we partake of, we should say, *Not
 unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, O
 Lord, give glory.* A man who is poor in
 spirit is empty of himself, and sees all his
 sufficiency is of God, who is the only self-
 sufficient and all-sufficient Being; he ac-
 knowledges all his happiness to be the effect
 of divine grace, and humbly looks up to the
 giver of every good and perfect gift for suit-
 able aids and supplies and assistance; he
 trusteth in the Lord with all his heart, and
 leans not to his own understanding, accord-
 ing to *Solomon's* advice, *Prov. iii. 5.* He
 acknowledges God in all his ways, and looks
 upon him as his great guide, comforter and
 instructor, and his exceeding great reward.
 And farther, he reverences the divine autho-
 rity, and sincerely subjects himself thereun-
 to; he owns the right his Creator has over
 him, and does not reckon himself his own
 master;

master ; he trembles at the divine word, and with the greatest humility, as well as the greatest readiness, obeys the divine precepts. Thus he walks humbly with God, and with the greatest submission has regard to his holy will in every thing. He also humbles himself under the divine chastisements, and patiently submits to them ; he quietly resigns himself to the disposal of the Almighty, and the language of his soul is, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good ; and, I will bear the indignation of the Lord, for I have sinned against him.* He considers that God afflicts him for his profit, and so he humbly hopes in him, and quietly waits the issue. He patiently bears his correcting hand, and humbly submits to it, as knowing that he is punished less than his iniquities have deserved. He is more troubled and grieved for the sins which may have occasioned his affliction, than for the affliction itself, and the only use he makes of it, is humbly to repent of those sins, and with the utmost caution to avoid them for the future. This humble patience under God's hand seems to be especially intended in the forecited lviith chap. of *Isa. ver. 15. I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* And the christians are certainly exhorted to it, in *James iv. 10. Humble yourselves in the sight of*

SERM.
VIII.

SERM. *of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. And,*
 VIII. *I Pet. v. 6. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.*

II. The temper of mind recommended in our text, may be considered as opposed to self-conceit and a too high opinion of ourselves on any account. Men are very prone to overvalue themselves and to admire their own parts, endowments, qualifications, and possessions. Self-love which is natural to us all, and which is a good thing in itself, if it be rightly governed and kept within its due bounds, this self-love, I say, is very apt to make us put a higher value upon our own abilities and attainments than they really deserve, and think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. But they who are poor in spirit avoid this excess, and think modestly and soberly of themselves, and of the qualifications they are endued with. They do not arrogate to themselves what they really have not, nor think themselves wiser and better than they really are. They have not so conceited an opinion of their own wisdom and prudence, as to think they can *never* stand in need of the counsel and direction of others; nor are they so righteous in their own eyes, as to fancy themselves better than every body else; they do not so trust in themselves that they are righteous, as to despise and condemn others, as the
 I proud

proud and haughty Pharisee did, *Luke xviii.* SERM.
II. who said, *God, I thank thee, that I am* VIII.
not as other men are, extortioners, unjust,
adulterers, or even as this publican. 

On the contrary, a man who is poor in spirit, thinks modestly, meanly of himself and of his own endowments and qualifications; and however accomplished he may be, he is not puffed up, is not filled with high swelling thoughts, nor captivated with self-conceitedness or a vain elation of mind. We are not indeed to think that we have not those qualities which we really have, this cannot be, and therefore they who pretend to this, have only a feigned humility. But whatever our parts, abilities, or endowments are, of which we must needs be conscious, we should not be proud of them, nor puffed up with a fond conceit of them, or despise others who want them. We should think that some, though not all others, may be wiser and better than ourselves, and may be capable, in some respect or other, to instruct or inform us, which instruction, we should never be above receiving and attending to, if it be offered us in a proper manner; for if we are, it shews that we are full of ourselves, and too much taken with the admiration of our own attainments, and so are far from being poor in spirit. One of that character is so far from being puffed up with high thoughts of himself, that he is
not

SERM. not much moved when others speak meanly
 VIII. of him, though without cause ; he is pleased
 and satisfied, as he may lawfully be, that he
 has some excellency or good qualification,
 without being proud or affected, or making
 a vain ostentation of it. And as he is not
 puffed up with a fond opinion of his parts,
 so neither is he with his state and condi-
 tion ; he is not proud of his riches, he does
 not think he has thereby a right to despise
 and contemn those who are under him, but
 he condescends to men of low estate, and is
 kind, courteous, affable and respectful to
 his inferiors. In short, a man who is poor
 in spirit, sees and acknowledges his own de-
 ficiencies, and whatever his endowments are,
 or whatever his condition be, he is not puf-
 fed up, is not wise in his own eyes, nor
 righteous in his own sight, nor great in his
 own esteem ; according to the apostle's words,
*Rom. xii. 16. Be of the same mind one towards
 another, mind not high things, but condescend
 to men of low estate ; be not wise in your own
 conceits.*

III. We are to consider the temper of
 those who are poor in spirit, as opposed to
 ambition, and aspiring or hunting after ho-
 nour, dignity and power amongst men. This
 is called the pride of life, by the apostle
John, which therefore must certainly be in-
 consistent with true humility and lowliness
 of mind. The disciples of Christ must not
 aim

aim at greatness and power in the world ; SERM. VIII.
Christ taught them, that he that was great-
est amongst them should be servant to the

rest, and himself set them an example of it ; it would therefore very ill suit with their character, who are thus to humble themselves, to court worldly honour, grandeur and dominion : Not but that a disciple of Christ may lawfully execute the office of a magistrate or civil governor ; but there is a great deal of difference between accepting of this when called to it, or even seeking after it, with a design purely to do good, and being ambitious of it, only for the sake of the power, honour and grandeur that attends it. The former is very consistent with christian humility, or being poor in spirit, but the latter is not ; as may be seen, *Matt.*

xviii. 1, 2, 3, 4. At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Another evangelist tells us, that they had disputed among themselves by the way, which of them should be the greatest. They had entertained the notion of a temporal kingdom to be set up by our Saviour, as all the Jews believed the kingdom of the Messiah would be, and they thought, that they, being his first disciples and followers, should be preferred before every body else, and be chief ministers of state in that kingdom, which they thought was to lord it over all the world. But see how

SERM. how excellently our blessed Lord corrects

VIII. their mistaken notions, though at that time,
 ~~~~~ it had little effect upon them.) *And Jesus*

*called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, i. e. from this ambitious and worldly temper, and become as little children, or like them who have no ambition, no worldly views or designs, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, or be as free from ambition and desire of worldly grandeur, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* Thus then the truly poor in spirit, are free from ambition, from aspiring after worldly greatness, and courting honour amongst men. They have so great a value for the honour that cometh from God only, that they very little regard the honour of men, and their hearts are so set on the heavenly kingdom and crown of glory that fadeeth not away, that power and dignity, and grandeur in the world, appear to them very inconsiderable things. They are content to move in a low sphere, and have no relish for worldly pomp and greatness; and can say with the Psalmist, *Pf. cxxxi. 1, 2. Lord my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things that are too high for me. Surely I have behaved and*  
*quieted*

*quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother ; my soul is even as a weaned child.* SERM. VIII.

IV. The temper of mind expressed in this phrase, the poor in spirit, may be considered as opposed to the inordinate love of wealth or worldly possessions. Wealth is that which answers all things in this world, or relating to the body, which procures all manner of gratifications, furnishes all kinds of worldly pleasure, and gains honour, esteem, and power in the world ; and therefore it is that men so generally covet after it, and are so indefatigable in the pursuit of it ; and it is certain that worldly minded men place all their happiness in it. But it is far otherwise with those who are truly poor in spirit ; they place their felicity in other more durable enjoyments, and so have their minds as far as their case will permit, disengaged from those vain perishing things, set light by them, and are, comparatively, very indifferent about them. They do, indeed, with *Agur*, desire a competency, but beyond that, are not much concerned. If they are rich in this world, they trust not in those uncertain riches, but in the living God : Their possessions do not make them high-minded, do not make them have ever the higher opinion of themselves, or ever the meaner of other men ; but they condescend to men of low estate, and carry themselves courteously, affably and gently towards the meanest

SERM. est of mankind. They do not contemn nor  
 VIII. despise the poor members of Christ's body,  
 but acknowledge them for their brethren,  
 and with all humility, treat them as such,  
 and are willing and ready to leave all their  
 possessions for Christ's sake. And if the  
 poor in spirit, are also poor in this world,  
 they are satisfied that *they are rich in faith  
 and heirs of the kingdom, which God hath  
 promised to them that love him.* They have  
 learnt with St. Paul, in *whatever state they  
 are to be therewith content* : They know *how  
 to suffer need as well as how to abound* ; they  
 envy not the rich man in his possessions, his  
 fine gardens, stately houses and rich furni-  
 ture ; but placing their chief happiness in  
 God, and setting their affections on things  
 above, they are very easy without those  
 earthly advantages and accommodations. As  
 Providence has placed them in a low con-  
 dition in the world, they do not murmur  
 or repine at it, but are content to be inferior  
 to other men. If they have an opportunity put  
 into their hands of gaining more of the good  
 things of this life, they will thankfully make  
 use of it ; but if not, they contentedly re-  
 sign themselves to the will of God, and are  
 very easy in his disposal of their affairs, as  
 knowing that he will cause all things to work  
 together for their good. They make not  
 haste to be rich in an unlawful way, and are  
 not discontented and uneasy with their pre-  
 sent

sent state, raising their minds beyond the SERM. perishing enjoyments of this world to the VIII. true riches of the heavenly kingdom. They are contented to suffer want and the loss of all worldly things for Christ's sake, as *knowing that they have in heaven a better, and an enduring substance.* They are not captivated with an inordinate love of the world, but exercise a holy contempt of it, and set not their affections on things on the earth, and so have an even and quiet temper of mind in all states and conditions, being neither puffed up in prosperity, nor cast down in adversity and want. The poverty of this world will be patiently borne by one who is poor in spirit, his mind being prepared as well for that as all other circumstances.

Thus we see who are the poor in spirit, whom Christ pronounces blessed. My next work will be, to consider that wherein their blessedness consists, *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; which, with the application, must be left to another discourse.

And now let us all endeavour to be of this character, to be lowly in heart and humble in spirit, and to discover this temper in our whole conversation, walking humbly with God, and behaving with humility towards men, and being patient and content in every state: For *blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*



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# S E R M O N IX.

Humility and Meekness Christian  
Virtues.

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MATT. V. 3.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the  
kingdom of heaven.*

SERM. IX. **I**N treating on these words, I proposed to  
consider,

I. The character of the persons, who are  
here pronounced blessed, or happy by our  
Saviour, *the poor in spirit.*

II. That wherein their blessedness consists,  
*Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

I. As to the character of the persons, *the  
poor in spirit*, I endeavoured to set that be-  
fore you in its proper light in my foregoing  
discourse. I shewed you that it was a *He-  
brew* phrase, and seems to be taken by our  
Lord from the old Testament; and by com-  
paring it with the same, or like phrases there,  
I

I think it plainly appeared, that by the *poor* SERM.  
*in spirit*, we were to understand such as are IX.

of a truly humble and lowly spirit, who are not confident and presumptuous, not self-conceited or high-minded; not proud and haughty, arrogant and ambitious, nor of a worldly, vain-glorious, aspiring temper; not elevated or puffed up, whatever their circumstances or abilities are, but modest in their opinion of themselves, low in their own eyes, humble in heart towards God, and towards all men, and patient and contented, how mean or afflictive soever their condition be in this world. I shall just repeat the passages then quoted to make out this sense, *Isa. lxvi. 2. For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him, that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word:* Here I observed, that we might read the words thus, To him that is of a poor and contrite spirit; or, To the poor and contrite in spirit: And so the phrase is exactly the same with that in our text, only the word contrite is joined with it. And to shew that *humble in spirit*, was meant by *poor in spirit*, I compared this with a parallel place in *Isa. lvii. 15. For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit,*

SERM. *rit*, or is contrite and humble in spirit, *to*

IX. *revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive*  
 ~~~~~ *the heart of the contrite ones.* Here we have

contrite in spirit, as in the forecited passage, and *humble in spirit*, plainly answers to *poor in spirit*, which must therefore signify the same thing. The other passages cited to confirm this sense, were, *Prov. xvi. 19. Better is it to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.* *Prov. xxix. 23. A man's pride shall bring him low, but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.* And *Matt. xi. 29.* where our Saviour says, *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* As the word translated lowly, when alone, signifies one in a poor, mean and low condition, but when joined with heart, as here, *lowly in heart*, one of a truly humble and lowly mind; so the word poor, which by itself expresses only a man's outward circumstances, when joined with spirit, as in our text, *poor in spirit*, must be supposed to signify a truly humble man, who has mean, low and abasing thoughts of himself, who thinks not more highly of himself than he ought to think, but forms a sober and modest opinion of himself, and of all his endowments and qualifications, who is neither puffed up in prosperity, nor impatient, uneasy and discontented in low circumstances, who is void of the pride of life, and a stranger to all aspiring thoughts

thoughts and ambitious desires, who is neither worldly nor high-minded, but maintains an even temper of mind, and a just indifferency in every state, and is of an humble spirit towards God and man, not scorning to exercise condescension towards his inferiors, be their circumstances ever so mean, nor disdaining to express all due deference towards those who are in any respect his inferiors. This is the man who is *poor in spirit*; which character we more particularly considered, 1. As it includes our humility with regard to the divine Being. 2. As opposed to self-conceit and a high opinion of ourselves on any account. 3. As opposed to ambition, and aspiring after honour, dignity and power amongst men. And, 4. As opposed to an inordinate love of wealth and worldly possessions.

1. I considered this temper of mind as it includes humility towards the divine Being. Thus we should always humbly acknowledge our necessary dependence on him for our very being and every thing we enjoy; we should look upon ourselves as nothing without him, and as miserable without his favour, and in all the comforts we partake of, should say, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory*: And as we necessarily depend on him, we should humbly look up to him for all suitable aids and supplies both for our natural and spiritual life,

SERM. life, and should with all lowliness of mind

IX. have all our expectation from him, and according to *Solomon's* advice, should *trust in the Lord with all our heart, and lean not to our own understanding*. We should be sensible of our wants and infirmities, and that our help is in God alone. We should also be truly humbled before God, in a sense of our manifold sins against him, and our great unworthiness to receive any good things from him; should humbly confess our transgressions unto him, and with the most lowly devotion of mind, implore the forgiveness of them. The penitent publican in the parable, truly represents one who is poor in spirit, *Luke xviii. 13. He standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner*. A man who is thus truly poor in spirit, does also humble himself under the divine chastisements; he patiently submits to them, and humbly resigns himself to the will and disposal of the Almighty; he acknowledges he is punished less than his iniquities have deserved, patiently bears the divine hand, and has the most humble and reverential regard to the divine instruction from thence.

2dly, We considered the temper of mind recommended in our text, as opposed to self-conceit and a too high opinion of ourselves on any account. They who are poor in spirit,

rit, think modestly and soberly of them-
 selves, and of the qualifications they are en-
 dowed with. They do not arrogate to them-
 selves what they really have not, nor think
 themselves wiser and better than they really
 are. They have not so conceited an opi-
 nion of their own wisdom and prudence, as
 to think they can never stand in need of the
 advice and direction of others ; they are not
 so righteous in their own eyes, as to fancy
 themselves better than every body else, or to
 despise and condemn their neighbours, as
 the proud, self-righteous Pharisee did ; nor
 however prosperous their worldly circum-
 stances are, do they think themselves so
 raised above others, as to look down upon
 them with contempt, or treat them with
 haughtiness and scorn. On the contrary, the
 truly poor in spirit, think modestly of them-
 selves in every condition, and however ac-
 complished they may be, how great soever
 their internal or external qualifications and
 advantages are, they are not puffed up, but
 are void of all high, swelling, conceited
 thoughts of themselves, and free from all
 vain elation of mind.

3dly, The character in our text was con-
 sidered as opposed to an ambitious temper of
 mind, to aspiring after worldly greatness and
 authority, and courting honour amongst
 men. Those christians who are truly poor
 in spirit, have, after the example of our Sa-

SERM. viour, so great a value for the honour that

IX. cometh from God only, that they very little regard the honour of men; and their hearts are so set on the heavenly kingdom, and the crown of glory that fadeth not away, that power, and dignity, and grandeur in the world, appear to them very inconsiderable things. They are content to move in a low sphere, and have no relish for worldly pomp and greatness; and if they should happen to be raised to it, they will not be puffed up, nor will they make any farther account of it, than as it gives them an opportunity of being the more serviceable to their fellow creatures, and doing the greater good to mankind. Our Saviour esteems those to be the greatest in his kingdom, who become the greatest servants to their fellow christians; and this is the temper of those who are truly poor in spirit. Instead of aiming at power and authority over others, and desiring to bear a great sway in the world, or in the church; they condescend to men of low estate, and count it their greatest happiness to be serviceable even to the meanest of mankind, however others may think it below their character and station, and count it an abasing and lessening of themselves so to do.

4thly, We considered the temper of those who are poor in spirit, as opposed to the inordinate love of wealth, and worldly possessions.

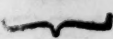
essions. Such persons place their felicity in other more durable enjoyments, and so have their minds as far as their state here will permit, disengaged from those vain perishing things, set light by them, and are comparatively very indifferent about them. If they are rich in this world, they trust not in those uncertain riches, but in the living God; and if they are poor and in low circumstances, they are satisfied, seeing they are *rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to them that love him*. They count themselves happy only in being rich towards God; and without this, how great worldly treasure soever they heap up, they are sensible they shall be in a most miserable condition.

Having thus shewn who are poor in spirit, whom our Lord pronounces blessed, I come now,

II. To consider wherein their blessedness does consist, which is expressed in these words, *For theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. The kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, (for they are synonymous expressions) has two significations in scripture. 1. We are frequently to understand by it, the kingdom of the Messiah in this world, with all the laws and precepts, and all the benefits and privileges thereof, or in other words, the gracious dispensation of the gospel, which our blessed Saviour came into the

SERM. the world to erect and establish. In this

IX. sense we are to take it, when it is said, *the kingdom of heaven is at hand, the kingdom of God is within you, or among you, the kingdom of God is come unto you, and the like;* as also when our Saviour and his apostles, are said to *preach the gospel of the kingdom, the gospel of the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of God.* Thus we are to understand it, where it is said, *the Jews thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear,* and this is meant by it in most of our Lord's parables, when he likens the kingdom of heaven to such and such things: And indeed, this is the import of the expression in most places of the gospels. The Messiah was prophesied of, under the character of a *king or prince*, and it was said, *that he should have a kingdom given to him.* Therefore by *the kingdom*, in a peculiar sense, the Jews understood the reign and government of the Messiah; and it is called *the kingdom of heaven*, and *the kingdom of God*, because the God of heaven appointed and gave it to him. Thus Ps. ii. 10. *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.* And Daniel says, *There was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom,* Dan. vii. 14. And our Saviour expresses himself thus to his disciples, *I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me.* Thus then the kingdom of heaven, signifies the kingdom of the Messiah

fish in this world, which God set up by SERM.
him, in order to reduce men to obedience IX.
and subjection to his holy will and authority, 
to the true spiritual worship of himself, and
the exercise of piety and virtue, and as a
means of conferring all spiritual blessings
upon them; for this kingdom is not of this
world, is not a worldly administration, but
is a spiritual kingdom, as are also the rules
and laws and privileges of it, which are con-
tained in the new Testament, and were pub-
lished by Christ himself and his apostles. *2dly,*
In many places of the new Testament, by the
kingdom of God, or of heaven, we are un-
doubtedly to understand the heavenly king-
dom, or the kingdom of glory, the state
of everlasting happiness into which the righ-
teous shall be admitted, and the eternal re-
ward of glory prepared for them in heaven.
Thus *Mat. v. 10. Blessed are they that are per-
secuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven.* That by the kingdom
of heaven, we are here to understand the
kingdom of glory above, may appear from
the 12th verse, *Rejoice and be exceeding glad,
for great is your reward in heaven; for so
persecuted they the prophets which were before
you.* So *Matt. vii. 21. Not every one that
saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into
the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the
will of my Father which is in heaven.* The
following words shew plainly what is here
meant

SERM. meant by the kingdom of heaven: *Many*

IX. *will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord,*

have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me all ye that work iniquity: Which is plainly spoken of the future state. See also Luke xii 32. where our Lord says to his disciples, Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. To the same purpose it is said, Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, Matt. xiii. 43. And in this sense, it seems, we are to understand the words, 1 Cor. vi. 10. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? And Gal. v. 21. — of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And thus we read of the heavenly kingdom, 2 Tim. iv. 18. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and shall preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom. Now, as in many places of scripture, by the kingdom of heaven, we are to understand the coming of the Messiah, to erect his kingdom in this world, or the dispensation of the gospel, and in others, the kingdom of glory, or the state of the blessed in the world to come; so elsewhere the expression is ambiguous, and may signify

signify either the one or the other, or both S E R M.
may be included in it. Thus in our text, IX.
where it is said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit,*
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; though
it be uncertain which was principally in-
tended by our Saviour, the spiritual kingdom
he was to set up by his preaching in this
world, or the state of eternal happiness and
glory, which the good and righteous shall
enjoy in the heavenly kingdom hereafter, yet
it may be truly said of the poor in spirit,
that theirs is the kingdom of heaven, in both
senses.

1st, Then, the poor in spirit are blessed, be-
cause the kingdom of the Messiah in this
world, or the gracious dispensation of the gos-
pel, belongs to them. They only are prepared
and disposed to enter into this kingdom, they
only are the true and proper subjects of it,
and they alone can enjoy the blessings and
privileges thereof. The poor in spirit are of
a teachable disposition, and apt to receive in-
struction when it is offered to them; and
when so heavenly and divine a doctrine as
that of our Saviour is set before them, they
will with all readiness of mind embrace the
same. They have nothing in them that is
contrary to this doctrine, no worldly views
but in subordination to piety and virtue, no
high and conceited thoughts of their own
wisdom and attainments, no eager desires af-
ter the honours and riches of this world;
and

SERM. meant by the kingdom of heaven: *Many*

IX. *will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me all ye that work iniquity: Which is plainly spoken of the future state. See also Luke xii 32. where our Lord says to his disciples, Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. To the same purpose it is said, Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, Matt. xiii. 43. And in this sense, it seems, we are to understand the words, 1 Cor. vi. 10. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? And Gal. v. 21. — of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And thus we read of the heavenly kingdom, 2 Tim. iv. 18. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and shall preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom. Now, as in many places of scripture, by the kingdom of heaven, we are to understand the coming of the Messiah, to erect his kingdom in this world, or the dispensation of the gospel, and in others, the kingdom of glory, or the state of the blessed in the world to come; so elsewhere the expression is ambiguous, and may signify*

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 but in subordination to piety and virtue, no
 high and conceited thoughts of their own
 wisdom and attainments, no eager desires af-
 ter the honours and riches of this world;
 and

SERM. and so that holy religion which teaches men to

IX. deny themselves, to set light by the things of
this world, and to have a superior regard to the blessings of a future life, will meet with a ready and grateful reception from them. It is no wonder that men of worldly minds, of ambitious desires, and of a proud, self-conceited, self-righteous disposition, should reject that doctrine which teaches them humbly to acknowledge and repent of their sins, to *be spiritually minded, to live as strangers and pilgrims in the world, not to love the world, nor the things that are in the world, as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, but to mortify all such desires, and bring down all such high thoughts: Whilst they continue of such a temper, they cannot embrace such a holy and spiritual institution in sincerity; but their minds will be alienated from it, and they will have no manner of inclination towards it. Thus the proud and worldly pharisees, who had so high an opinion of themselves, who were so wise and holy in their own eyes, *who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others*, who sought for praise and honour amongst men, and were worldly minded and vain-glorious; always opposed the pure and spiritual doctrine of the gospel, which was perfectly agreeable to him who delivered it, who was *meek and lowly in heart*. They rejected the counsel of God against them-

themselves, they reproached and derided our blessed Saviour, and were so far from believing on him, or heartily embracing his doctrine, that they persecuted him and sought to destroy him. And indeed, as our Lord says, how could they believe, *who received honour one of another, and sought not the honour that comes from God only*, John v. 45. Thus also the evangelist tells us, that the reason why those rulers who were convinced of the truth of our Saviour's doctrine, did not confess him, was, because *they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*, they were fond of applause and honour amongst men, and attached to worldly greatness, and therefore could not endure to submit to that religion, which taught them so great humility and self-denial. So true is that saying of our Saviour, *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*; as indeed we cannot, unless we are free from pride, ambition and worldly mindedness, as they are. But if we are so humble and lowly and disinterested, our temper of mind being agreeable to the religion of the gospel, we shall readily fall in with it, and heartily embrace it. God designed his gospel for such persons, and not at all for the proud and worldly, and ambitious, and self-conceited, whilst they continue such; and therefore he has entirely suited and adapted it to

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the

SERM. the former, and of consequence it cannot

IX. be agreeable to the temper of the latter; who cannot therefore receive it in sincerity, whilst they remain of such a temper, though the others certainly will; see for this purpose, *Matt. xi 25. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent; or, that having hid these things from the wise and prudent, such as are possessed of carnal worldly wisdom, or are wise in their own eyes, thou hast revealed them unto babes, the humble and lowly minded, who are as little children, void of self-conceit, worldly wisdom, ambition or desire of vain-glory. Our Saviour concludes, Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight; this must be agreeable to his mind and will, who resisteth the proud, but giveth grace, or sheweth favour to the humble. And God is said to hide the gospel from the wise and prudent in their own conceit, not because he has not made it known to them, but because he has contrived it to be of such a nature, that whilst persons continue so, they will not, they cannot heartily embrace it, and give themselves up to the direction of it. And he is said to reveal it to babes, the humble and lowly in their own eyes, because it is so suited to their temper and disposition, that they will readily embrace it when made known to them*

them. Thus then it may be truly said of SERM.
the poor in spirit, that theirs is the kingdom of IX.
heaven, or the kingdom of the Messiah, be-
 cause their humility rendering them teach-
 able, submissive and obedient, prepares them
 to enter into this kingdom ; and, I may add
 farther, makes them true and faithful sub-
 jects of it; or living members of Christ's bo-
 dy. And the blessings and privileges of this
 kingdom, as remission of sins, and the like,
 belong only to the humble, penitent contrite
 man, *Luke iv. 18. The spirit of the Lord is*
upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach
the gospel to the poor, i. e. the poor in spirit,
he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to
preach deliverance to the captives, and reco-
vering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty
them that are bruised.

2. The poor in spirit are blessed, because
theirs is the kingdom of heaven, i. e. the king-
 dom of glory, or state of eternal life and
 happiness in the world to come. The king-
 dom of the Messiah terminates in this ; con-
 sequently, they who are the real and sincere
 subjects of his kingdom here, will undoubt-
 edly have a share in the glorious kingdom a-
 bove. And as the poor in spirit, the truly
 humble and lowly minded, are prepared to
 enter into Christ's kingdom on earth, and are
 true and real subjects of it, so they are pre-
 pared for the heavenly kingdom, and will,
 without doubt, obtain an entrance into it.

SERM. Humility, or lowliness of mind towards God

IX. and men, is necessary to the practice of all

other virtues, and prepares and disposes us to the exercise thereof; it makes those things, those worldly concerns, which would otherwise be a temptation to us, and hinder us in the way of our duty, to have very little influence upon us, and causes us to value above all things the divine approbation: It makes us regardless of all earthly considerations, of riches, honour and praise among men, when they stand in competition with our duty, as they often may, and renders persons susceptible of good advice and instruction. The poor in spirit are teachable and governable, being not puffed up with an opinion of their own wisdom; and having the greatest regard to the honour that comes from God only, they seek above all things to please him, and by the practice of holiness, righteousness and goodness, to secure his approbation. Now, as holiness is the only way to happiness, and the promise of eternal life and glory is made to the humble penitent, who is so sorry for his sins as to forsake them, which is one property of the poor in spirit; and to such as endeavour to please God, which the truly humble alone are sincerely inclined to, they, and they only, are the persons who, according to his promise, will secure to themselves a title to that eternal life, glory and blessedness. Thus then the kingdom of glory in

the world to come belongs to the poor in spirit, and they will undoubtedly be raised to a share in it. How happy and blessed then must they be? For this kingdom, as has been said, is that state of eternal life and happiness which God has prepared for them that love him, to be enjoyed after this life. And who can express, or conceive the happiness and glory of this state, when the poor in spirit shall be delivered from all manner of evil, from all sorrow and affliction, and shall be exalted to the possession of the highest felicity, in the enjoyment of God's favourable presence, and that for ever. Thus we see the blessedness of those who are poor in spirit; *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, the kingdom of the Messiah here, and of glory hereafter. And this is agreeable to many other expressions of scripture, wherein God's peculiar respect and regard is expressed to the humble person. Thus it is said, *He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace, or favour, to the humble.* And in the forecited passages from *Isaiah*, God says, *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and contrite in spirit, and trembleth at my word.* And, *That he dwells with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* And thus our Saviour says more than once, *He that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

SERM. Having thus considered these words of our
 IX. Saviour, I shall now conclude with a word
 or two of application.

1. Hereby we see that, in conferring the blessing of the gospel, God does not regard the outward circumstances of persons with respect to the things of this life, but the temper and disposition of their minds. As he does not respect the person of the rich, so neither does he of the poor. He does indeed consider the state of those who are oppressed with power, and will, no doubt, make all reasonable allowances for them in the next life. But, as to an actual share in the benefits of the gospel, poverty no more entitles a man to it than riches. In short, it matters not whether a man be rich or poor in this world, so he be but poor in spirit; tho' it must be acknowledged, that, upon many accounts, it is more difficult for a rich man to preserve this temper of mind, than for one that is poor.

2. We may see from what has been said, that this temper of mind, which our Saviour intends by being poor in spirit, is truly nobleness of spirit. By *the poor in spirit* we are not to understand persons of a mean and fordid spirit, such as by any consideration are induced to do what is really unfitting, and does not become them as rational creatures, who stoop to any little, mean and fordid tricks for their worldly advantage, and basely flatter men in power, and servilely contribute

bute to bring about their ill designs thro' fear S E R M. or desire of gain, or any such low, mean and IX. unworthy principles or motives. But, on the contrary, *the poor in spirit* are such as are truly humbled for their sins against God, and walk humbly before him, and have his fear prevailing in their hearts beyond all other considerations; as are not vainly puffed up with any imaginary or real excellency, whether internal or external, but think soberly and modestly of themselves, and their attainments and qualifications; who are not of an ambitious and worldly temper, but prefer in their hearts the honour that comes from God only, and the joys of an eternal state, before the vain pomp and pleasures of a transitory and perishing world. And certainly nothing can be more agreeable to right reason, nothing expresses a truer greatness and nobleness of mind than this; as it is most unreasonable and absurd for such dependent, indigent, unworthy creatures as we, in such a vain and perishing state, to be proud, and haughty, and conceited of our own abilities, and greedy after such transitory honours and enjoyments as those of this world are.

3. We may hence see what good reason our Lord had to begin his sermon with declaring the blessedness of the poor in spirit, seeing this disposition of mind is a needful propogation to all christian virtue, and abso-

SERM. lutely necessary to the practice of the several

IX. parts of it, especially to those he mentions in the verses immediately following. We cannot mourn for our sins as we ought, unless we are poor in spirit, unless our hearts are truly humble under a sense of them. Meekness and gentleness towards all men is inseparably joined with this temper of mind, and meekness and forbearance are altogether inconsistent with pride and haughtiness; therefore the wise man opposes them one to the other, when he says, *The patient in spirit, i. e. the meek and gentle, is better than the proud in spirit.* And humility and meekness are joined together by the apostle, *Eph. iv. 2. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.* They who are righteous in their own eyes will not hunger and thirst after true righteousness, but they who are sensible of their defects herein, and convinced of the necessity of it, as the poor in spirit are, will certainly with the utmost diligence apply themselves to the pursuit of it. Humility is also necessary to mercy and charity, and therefore it is said, *that charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.* This humble disposition of mind is an inseparable propagator of true charity, nor can we be truly merciful and charitable without it; and therefore it is frequently joined with it in scripture; particularly, *Col. iii. 12. Put*

on therefore, (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, &c. Nor can we be pure in heart, sincere, and void of all corrupt and perverse principles, without being poor in spirit, and preserving true humility of heart. And nothing tends more to peace and concord among men than humility and lowliness of mind; as nothing is more apt to inflame mens breasts on every little occasion with anger and resentment, and to create animosities and contention amongst them, than pride, ambition, and the like; therefore Solomon says, *He that is proud of heart stirreth up strife*, Prov. xxviii. 25. And in another place, *Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath*; so far is a proud person from being a peace-maker.

Finally, A man who is of a proud disposition, who is high-minded, worldly and ambitious, is not very likely to be willing to suffer for righteousness sake; but he who is poor in spirit, who is humble and lowly minded, who has a mean regard to all the riches and honours of this life, and sets his affection on things above, and the state of eternal happiness and glory hereafter to be enjoyed by the righteous; such a person, I say, will be willing to suffer any thing, even death itself, when called to it, for the sake of Christ and his gospel, which gives him the promise of that glorious life.

SERM. Thus then we see how necessary this temper of mind is to the discharge of all christian

IX. duties. Let us all therefore, whatever our outward condition be, whatever our attainments and qualifications are, seriously endeavour to preserve true humility of mind, or to be poor in spirit. Let those who are rich in this world give special heed to this, forasmuch as they are in most danger of having their minds corrupted in this respect, and falling into the contrary temper of pride, ambition, haughtiness and contempt of others, or of covetousness and worldly mindedness. Many, instead of being poor in spirit, are poor spirited, or narrow spirited, whereas they ought to do good, to be rich in good works, to be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate. This is the best discovery of such persons being poor in spirit, the best proof and demonstration of it. And then as to those who are poor in this world, they ought to look upon godliness with contentment to be great gain; and therefore should be contented with their condition, as knowing that *God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of that glorious kingdom he has promised to those that love him.* Finally, let us all endeavour to be poor in spirit, and humble in heart towards God and all men, and spiritually and heavenly minded, instead of worldly minded, that so being prepared,

pared, and truly disposed for the exercise of SERM.
all christian virtues, we may, in the sincere IX.
practice thereof, have true comfort and sa-
tisfaction in our minds here, and at last be
exalted to the possession and enjoyment of e-
ternal life and glory in heaven; for *blessed*
are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the king-
dom of heaven.

S E R M O N X.

The Fruits of the Spirit.

GALAT. v. 22, 23.

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : Against such there is no law.

SERM.
X.

AS in the beginning of christianity the unbelieving *Jews* were the most violent persecutors of Christ's disciples, and the most zealous opposers of the christian faith ; so those of them who believed, and owned Jesus to be the Messiah, usually caused the greatest disturbance and disorder in the church, whilst out of an excessive veneration for circumcision, and the other *Jewish* ceremonies, they were for mixing *Judaism* with christianity, and being not contented with their own practice in this respect, they were for imposing the legal observances on the *Gentile* converts, giving out, that unless they were circumcised, and kept the law of *Moses*, they could not be saved ; that they could not be

be justified by faith alone, without the deeds S E R M.
of the law, and that they could have no part X.
in the Messiah's kingdom, unless they sub-
jected themselves to *Moses* as well as unto
Christ. And as the *Jews* were dispersed
thro' most places of the world, so in almost
every church of the *Gentiles* there were ma-
ny of them, some whereof being, as was
said, so zealously affected towards the law,
caused such differences and disorders upon
the account of it in the several churches they
belonged to; which the great apostle of the
Gentiles, in most of his epistles, was con-
cerned to compose and rectify.

Thus in the churches of *Galatia*, who
were converted by the apostle's ministry,
there were some *Jews* who endeavoured to
bring the *Gentile* christians under the *Jewish*
yoke, and were for imposing circumcision on
them; in which matter they had influenced
many of them, and almost corrupted them
from the simplicity which is in Christ; and
forasmuch as they had a great respect for the
apostle who called them unto the grace of
Christ, or converted them to christianity, the
better to prevail on them to submit to cir-
cumcision, these *Jewish* christians insinuated
that he was for it also. Thus not only ma-
ny were turned from the truth of the gospel,
but this caused great debates, contentions and
divisions among them, and tended to over-
throw

SERM. throw that christian charity which they were
 X. obliged by the gospel to maintain.

To prevent and cure these evils, the apostle writes this epistle to them, wherein he first defends himself against the foresaid insinuation, *viz.* of his being for circumcision, and shews that it is utterly false and groundless; and then by several arguments he dissuades them from subjecting themselves to the law of *Moses*, and establishes justification by faith, or by the gospel only; and forasmuch as the differences among them had caused great alienation of mind and affection in them one from another, he exhorts them in the end to love and charity, and cautions those who understood their christian liberty, not to use that liberty for an occasion to the flesh, to uncharitableness, strife and disorder, the works of the flesh, but by love to serve one another, seeing all the law was fulfilled in this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* And, to set forth the evil of hatred, strife and uncharitableness, he gives a catalogue of the works of the flesh, wherein he joins those vices with the most enormous crimes; and to prevail on them to maintain a charitable and loving disposition, he tells them that this, together with other virtues and excellent dispositions, is the fruit of the spirit; *But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: Against such there is no law.*

It

The Fruits of the Spirit.

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It may be very proper, in the *first* place, S E R M. to consider what we are to understand by *the* X. *spirit*, which these virtues are said to be *the* fruit of.

By *the spirit*, the apostle sometimes means the holy spirit that was given to all christians, and these virtues may be said to be his fruit, inasmuch as he reneweth our mind, and sanctifieth us, influences and excites us to, and assists us in the practice of them. But sometimes by *the spirit* the apostle understands the gospel, or the christian religion, which he calls *spirit*, in opposition to the law or *Jewish* oeconomy, which he styles *flesh*; thus, Rom. viii. 8, 9. *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God: But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit.* It is certain that, chap. vii. 5. by being in the flesh, the apostle means being under the law in its carnal and literal sense, without having any regard to Christ. And tho' in the foregoing verses of this viiith chap. he uses *flesh* and *spirit* for the two different principles in man, it is very common with the apostle, when he has made use of a word, to use the same word presently after, tho' in somewhat a different sense. But it is very plain that by *flesh* and *spirit*, Gal. iii. 3. are meant the *law* and *gospel*; *Are ye so foolish? having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?* The dispensation of the law may be called *flesh*, because it consisted mostly of carnal ordinances,

SERM. dinances, of ceremonies and fleshly rites and

X. observances, and the gospel may be called *spirit*, as it contains the spiritual meaning of the law, in opposition to its carnal and literal sense, 2 Cor. iii. 6. *Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit*, i. e. not of the letter of the law, or the bare literal meaning of it, but of the spirit of the law, or the spiritual sense of it, which is Christ or the gospel, Christ being *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*: Or the dispensation of the gospel may be called *spirit*, because of the plentiful effusion of the holy spirit under it, and the promise of its influence and assistance to them that believe and embrace it. And if we consider this to be meant by *spirit*, it is certain that these, and such like, things are the fruit of the gospel, as it is the design of it to promote and propagate these virtues; as it every where prescribes and enjoins them, requires and excites men to the practice of them; as it gives all manner of encouragement to them, and affords all necessary influence and assistance herein; so that the gospel in all respects tends to produce these excellent effects, and these virtues are altogether agreeable to it. But, in the next place, by *the spirit*, the apostle frequently intends that principle in men, which being renewed and strengthened by the spirit of God, and duly attended to, directs, leads and inclines them to

The Fruits of the Spirit.

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to that which is good ; as by *flesh* he often SERM.
means the opposite principle, *viz.* those ir- X.
regular passions, appetites and desires which
incline and hurry men on to sin. This is
what the apostle commonly understands by
flesh and *spirit* in most discourses of this na-
ture, and the latter he also calls *the spirit*
of the mind, Eph. iv. 23. *And be renewed in*
the spirit of your mind, the inward man, Rom.
vii. 22. *For I delight in the law of God, after*
the inward man, the mind, and the law of
the mind, ver. 23. *But I see another law in*
my members warring against the law of my
mind. And, ver. 25. *So then with the mind*
I myself serve the law of God. By these ex-
pressions the apostle means the principle of
right reason, or that principle which under-
stands, suggests, and prompts to what is
right, and just, and good ; and he considers
it in christians as renewed, sanctified and as-
sisted by the holy spirit of God. In this
sense the word *spirit* is for the most part to be
taken in that discourse of the apostle's which
we have Rom. viii. and thus it seems most
natural to understand the word in this place ;
for by *the flesh*, ver. 19. to whose works *the*
fruit of the spirit is in our text opposed, he
certainly means the contrary principle, *viz.*
all irregular motions, inclinations and habits ;
and, ver. 17. these principles are plainly in-
tended, for *the flesh lusteth against the spirit,*
and the spirit against the flesh : and these are

contrary

SERM. *contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot*

X. *do the things that ye would ; or, as it ought to*
 have been rendered, *so that ye do not the things*
that ye would. Now, if we take the word
spirit in our text in this sense, as is most rea-
 sonable, it is certain that these virtues, which
 the apostle mentions, are the product of this
 principle, that they flow from it as their
 source, and are entirely agreeable to it. And
 we must not think that all the fruits of the
 spirit are here set down by the apostle, for
 he mentions those only that were most suit-
 able to his purpose ; tho' all manner of vir-
 tues, all the duties that respect God, our-
 selves and one another, all piety, holiness and
 righteousness, are indeed the fruit of the spi-
 rit, and the proper effects of a mind renewed
 by the spirit of God ; the fruit of the spirit
 is in all goodness, and righteousness, and
 truth ; but our work at this time is to con-
 sider only those virtues here mentioned by the
 apostle, as the fruit of the spirit.

I. Therefore the first fruit of the spirit
 mentioned by the apostle is *love*. Love to
 God is certainly the fruit of the spirit, is a-
 greeable to the highest reason, and especially
 required in the gospel ; we should *love the*
Lord our God with all our heart, with all our
soul, with all our mind, and with all our
strength : But here we are to understand the
 apostle of love to men, as the word *love*, or
charity,

charity, put absolutely, does most common- SERM.
ly signify; and that the apostle means chari- X.

ty or love to men, may appear, if we consider his design of making mention of it after this manner, he was speaking to them who were divided in their affections, whose dissensions and disputes had caused strifes and animosities amongst them, and who upon this account began to be at enmity one with another, and to bite and devour one another; and his design was to let them know how contrary this disposition and temper of mind was to the temper and spirit of the gospel, and how disagreeable to a mind renewed by the holy spirit, whereupon he tells them, that *the fruit of the spirit was love*, which was quite contrary to that hatred, envy and strife which was beginning to be among them, which were no other than the fruits of the flesh. Thus the apostle in the precedent verses exhorts them to love one another, and warns them of the danger of the contrary disposition, *ver. 13, &c. Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh, &c.* I shall not stand to explain this virtue of charity, every one knows what it is to love

O

him-

SERM. himself, and how he is influenced by this
 X. love ; and he ought to love his neighbour as
 himself, to maintain such a good-will and affection to him as to himself, and to discover it in the like instances upon all occasions. The properties of this virtue, of this good-will and affection, and kind disposition, are set down by the apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 4,—7. It is often used for the whole of our duty towards our neighbour, and contains some of the virtues that follow in our text, two of which are expressly mentioned by the apostle as the properties of charity, when he says, *charity suffereth long, and is kind*. But we are not now to consider these under this head. Charity is most expressly commanded, most strictly and frequently enjoined in the gospel ; it was the design of the gospel to recommend and promote it ; it is agreeable to the dictates of reason, and is the true christian spirit. The apostle exhorts above all things to *put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness*. Charity is to be extended to all men, even to our enemies ; and we are especially exhorted to maintain it towards our christian brethren ; our Saviour most earnestly requires it, and his apostles, by his direction, frequently recommend it in the strongest manner, we should love one another with a pure heart fervently, and should *walk in love, as Christ loved us*.

II. The

The Fruits of the Spirit.

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II. The second fruit of the spirit mentioned by the apostle is *joy*, a calm and chearful disposition, a glad and joyful temper of mind. The gospel affords the best grounds for joy and gladness, and the new creation spoken of by the apostle, tends every where to secure it. A christian by subduing his lusts and irregular passions, frees his mind from the greatest disturbance and uneasiness, and by acquiring virtuous habits and dispositions, lays a foundation for solid comfort and joy, and for a happy, calm and chearful mind. Joy is a very desirable thing, and that which all men would willingly possess; but there is no joy so excellent as the spiritual joy of a christian. Worldly joy is very mean, uncertain and transitory, and of little account; but the true, valuable, solid and lasting joy, is that of a good man, who rejoices in God, in a sense of his favour, and in hope of his glory. Holy habits and dispositions which are the fruit of the spirit, of a mind renewed and sanctified by the spirit of God, naturally cause this happy temper, this serene, calm and chearful frame; and those that are truly religious, that fear and love God, and obey all his commandments, and walk after the spirit, will experience a sensible pleasure, arising from the conformity to the divine will and will have the highest joy and satisfaction from a sense of their Maker's approbation. The

SERM.
X.

SERM. divine promises in the gospel of pardon
 X. and future happiness to all who repent,
 and turn to God, who forsake the works
 of the flesh, and walk after the spirit,
 are matter of the highest joy and satisfaction
 to all such persons: And the holy spirit of
 God that dwells in the faithful, causes the
 greatest peace and tranquillity in their minds;
 they have the highest joy arising from his
 divine consolations. The kingdom of God
 consists among other things, of joy in the
 Holy Ghost. They who received the word
 with much affliction, nevertheless received
 it with joy of the Holy Ghost. Christians
 are exhorted to maintain this holy joy, 1
Thess. v. 16. Rejoice evermore. Phil. iv. 4.
*Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say
 rejoice.* Thus the fruit of the spirit is joy;
 whereas sorrow, uneasiness, anxiety and
 misery is the fruit of the flesh. As those
 who follow the lusts of the flesh, cause
 trouble and uneasiness to themselves, those
 who follow the spirit, and obey its dictates,
 are blessed with inward comfort, joy and
 satisfaction, joy and tranquillity of mind.
 And it seems, the apostle in some respect,
 opposes this happy frame to the hatred and
 envy mentioned among the works of the
 flesh, which are indeed the worst kind of
 sadness and uneasiness.

III. The third fruit of the spirit is *peace*,
i. e. concord and unanimity, or a quiet and

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SERM.

X.

peaceable disposition and deportment; a temper of mind that is for maintaining concord and friendship, that is averse to quarrel and discord, and falling out with one another, is for composing differences and living quietly with all men. The spirit of the gospel is a peaceful spirit; peace is frequently recommended in the gospel, and the followers of it are required, as much as in them lies, *to live peaceably with all men*: The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and those who are renewed in the spirit of their mind, are of a quiet, calm, composed and pacifick temper, and *follow after the things that make for peace*. The wisdom that is from above is peaceable, tending to peace and concord, and teaching to *live a quiet and peaceable life*. Contrary to this peace and concord which the gospel recommends, and the spirit of Christ teaches, is a turbulent, passionate, quarrelsome and contentious disposition, discord, strife and variance, and the like; a temper of mind that is for picking quarrels, for causing differences and disturbances, and putting all things into disorder; these are the works of the flesh; but the fruit of the spirit is concord and peace, a quiet and pacifick temper and carriage; the gospel requires us to be peace-makers, to have peace one with another, and *to follow peace with all men*.

SERM.

IV. Another fruit of the spirit, is *long-*

X.

suffering; a patient bearing of injuries, and forbearing those that do them. Those who practice this virtue are not soon in a passion, are not easily transported into resentment upon every occasion; but they defer their anger, are disposed to put up injuries and wrongs done them, bear long with the miscarriages of men, and make not haste to tender evil for evil, to revenge any affront, or to exact just punishment for a just crime. They will be ready to pass by indignities offered them, and even to forget wrongs done to them, they will not be forward to retaliate, nor rigorously to exact satisfaction for every damage they may unjustly suffer; but will bear patiently with those that have offended them, and be ready to forgive them. Christians are exhorted to exercise this virtue, and the consideration of the forbearance and long suffering of God towards them, should induce them to do the like by others, *Eph. iv. 2. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. Col. iii. 12, 13. Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

V. *Gentleness* or kindness, is another fruit of the spirit; a sweet, kind, courteous
and

The Fruits of the Spirit.

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and affable disposition and demeanour. SERM.
Christianity does not make men to be of a X.
sour, ill-natur'd and crabbed temper, but
reforms their nature, makes them respectful,
kind and courteous, and inspires them with
sweetness of disposition; a mild, conde-
scending and respectful carriage becomes a
christian, the gospel requires it, and it is en-
tirely agreeable to the spirit of it: He ought
not to be morose and fullen, testy and peev-
ish, haughty and disrespectful, but should be
of a smooth, tractable and kind disposition,
and should carry it towards all with a be-
coming respect.

VI. The next fruit of the spirit men-
tioned by the apostle, is *goodness*. All man-
ner of moral goodness is certainly the work
of the spirit; but here we are to under-
stand beneficence or liberality, or doing
good to others; this is a virtue where-
by we contribute to the relief, help and
support of our neighbour, and do him all
the good we can; as the fruit of the spi-
rit is love, so goodness or beneficence must
be the fruit of the spirit, for this is no other
than the effect of sincere love to our neigh-
bour; this duty of doing good to others, is
very often recommended in the new Testa-
ment, *e. g.* Gal. vi. 10. *As we have there-
fore opportunity, let us do good unto all men,
especially unto them that are of the household of
faith.* 1 Tim. vi. 18. *That they do good, that*

SERM. *they be rich in good works, ready to distribute,*

X. *willing to communicate.* Heb. xiii. 16. *But to do good, and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* The gospel requires us to do good to all men as we have opportunity, even our enemies, as our Saviour bids us *do good to them that hate us.* We should give to them that are in want, according to our ability, and should contribute what we can to the relief of their necessities, we should help them every way as we are capable, and should do them good in every respect; and this every one that impartially follows the dictates of his mind and of the holy spirit in the scripture, will certainly do, *for the fruit of the spirit is goodness.*

VII. Another fruit of the spirit is *faith*, *i. e.* fidelity or faithfulness; thus the word is rendered, *Tit. ii. 10. Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity.* The gospel teaches us to live justly, and to speak truth with our neighbour. We should be true to our word, should make good our promises, should be faithful in the management of any affair we are entrusted with, and should be just and honest in all our dealings; we should practice no deceit or falshood, should make use of no arts to circumvent and deceive, and should take care that we never prove false to our trust; we should constantly maintain truth, should preserve integrity and uprightness,

ness, and should shew all good fidelity in the management of whatever is put into their hands. SERM. X.

VIII. The next fruit of the spirit is *meekness*. This is pretty much of the same nature with some of the same virtues that we have treated of before, especially long-suffering and gentleness; but I shall nevertheless say something of it here. Meekness then is a quiet and mild disposition, that is averse from wrath and anger, and from cruelty and fierceness, and from *rendring evil for evil*; it takes injuries and affronts patiently, and is very little moved at them, and is averse from revenge and retaliation; it chuses oftentimes to give up its right, rather than to proceed to extremities, and endeavours to *overcome evil with good*. This virtue we are often exhorted to, and our Saviour says, *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*, Matt. v. 5.

IX. The last virtue mentioned by the apostle, as the fruit of the spirit, is *temperance*, continence, or a command over one's self. This virtue consists in bridling and restraining our passions and appetites, and keeping them within due bounds, so as not to gratify them beyond what is lawful; so that moderation in eating and drinking, and in the use of all worldly enjoyments, is here required, and every excess whatsoever to be avoided, every unlawful gratification, and every

SERM. every kind of excess, is contrary to this vir-

X. tue of temperance, all chastity and moderation are included in it, and it consists in the due government of one's self in every respect. We are often exhorted to abstain from every impurity, and to avoid every excess; our Saviour charges his disciples to *take heed lest their hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life.* And the apostle *Peter* exhorts to *add to knowledge temperance,* 2 Epist. i. 6. This is a most necessary and comprehensive virtue, and what all they who are renewed in the spirit of their mind, endeavour to maintain. Thus have we briefly considered these nine fruits of the spirit, viz. love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. The apostle concludes, *Against such there is no law,* καὶ τῶν τοιούτων, against such things, or these and the like virtues, there is no law, they being agreeable to all law. The preceeding catalogue of vices, or of the works of the flesh, have all law against them, and are condemned by it: The apostle mentions the law of Christ in particular, as being against them, when he says, *of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* But these and the like fruits of the spirit, these virtues, are altogether agreeable to the law of nature, to the moral law of the *Jews,* and

and to the gospel, or the law of Christ, so S E R M. that there is no law against them, but each X. law is entirely for them. We may also understand these words, *against such there is no law*, of persons who maintain these virtues, against such persons, *viz.* as exercise these virtues, or bring forth such fruits of the spirit, *there is no law*; there is no law to condemn such as walk thus after the spirit, such persons are approved of God, are taken into his favour, and stand justified before him, and so are not under condemnation. The apostle says, *The law was not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly, and for sinners, for unholy and profane, &c.* 1 Tim. i. 9. The law was not made to condemn the just man, but to restrain and condemn the wicked. Thus have we considered these words of the apostle, and now to conclude.

1. Hereby we see that the gospel by leading us to holiness, and bringing us to the exercise of virtue, tends to our real comfort here, and happiness hereafter. It is the design of the gospel to reduce men to the practice of holiness, righteousness and goodness, to this end, are all the precepts and exhortations, promises and threatnings of the gospel, and for this purpose, the holy spirit is promised to renew us in the spirit of our mind. Now certainly, the greatest pleasure, comfort and satisfaction arises from the exercise

SERM. exercise of these virtues, and therefore the apostle tells us, that joy is one of the fruits of the spirit; and as this joy is derived to the mind from the exercise of those virtues whilst here, so they are followed with the reward of eternal felicity and glory in the world to come. There is no law against them who practice these virtues, and so they shall not come into condemnation; and as they have the divine approbation, they shall be eternally happy *in his presence, where there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.* Thus the gospel by leading us to holiness, leads us to true comfort here, and happiness hereafter.

2. Let us all endeavour to bring forth the fruit of the spirit. Let us *walk after the spirit, and not after the flesh. The fruit of the spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth;* let us therefore follow after these things, and so *walk as children of light;* let us abandon all the works of the flesh, as knowing, that they *who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God,* and let us abound in all the fruits of the spirit, that we may escape condemnation, for *against such there is no law:* Let us exercise these virtues in particular that we have been treating of; let us love all men, love our enemies, and love one another. Let us *follow peace with all men,* let us exercise long-suffering and forbearance, and be of a kind, courteous

teous and affable disposition, for *charity suffereth long and is kind.* Let us do good to all as we have opportunity, and let us live righteously, let us observe truth, and be faithful in all we do. Let us be possessed of true christian meekness, and let us be temperate in all things. And that we may bring forth these fruits, let us be renewed in the spirit of our mind, let us attend to the gospel, and pray for the assistance of the holy spirit; that in the exercise of these virtues, we may have comfort, joy and satisfaction in our own minds here, and may attain to eternal felicity hereafter; for there is no condemnation to them who thus walk after the spirit, and though *to be carnally minded is death, to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

SERM.
X.

S E R M O N X I .

God our Saviour and Deliverer.

PSAL. l. 15.

*And call upon me in the day of trouble ; I will
deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

SERM.
XI.

AS God is a being of most perfect goodness, so he takes pleasure in communicating his goodness to his creatures, the works of his hands : And so great is his goodness towards the children of men, that notwithstanding their manifold sins and transgressions against him, he is pleased to bestow innumerable blessings upon them : So that all the advantages and comforts we enjoy, must be the effect of his rich grace and exceeding great mercy ; since it must be acknowledged, that by our sins, we have rendered ourselves justly obnoxious to his displeasure, and have deserved judgments at his hands rather than blessings, and evil rather than good. We are indeed liable to many evils in this state, as well as to enjoy a great deal of good ; but then
with

with regard to the evils we may suffer, it is SERM. declared, that God *does not afflict, nor grieve* XI. *the children of men*: Our sins therefore must be the occasion of them; and farther, they are designed by our good and gracious God and merciful Father, for our real good and happiness in the end. *No affliction, indeed, for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless it yieldeth afterwards the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby*; so that all the afflictions that God sends, or permits to come upon us here, are as so many corrections and chastisements from the hands of our heavenly Father, designed for our amendment, and for our real advantage, to set us at a greater distance from sin, and to give us the greater aversion to it, and to cause us to have a greater regard to and be more in love with our duty for the future. And when afflictions and troubles have had this blessed effect, and this valuable end is answered by them, when we are really made better, and are brought to a due sense of our duty thereby; then God is usually pleased some way or other, as he sees to be most fit, to deliver his servants out of them; which deliverance should likewise so affect them as to engage them to express their gratitude to their great deliverer and benefactor, by a more exact conformity to his will, and endeavour to glorify him in their whole conversation; according

SERM. according to what is said in our text: *And*

XI. *call upon me in the day of trouble; and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

These words are to be understood as spoken by God to the people of *Israel*. And indeed this whole Psalm was designed for the instruction of that people, to teach them what they should do, and what they should not do, wherein the true service of God consisted, and what was in itself indifferent, and was no real part of it, though imposed for some particular end and purpose. The *Jews*, as well before, as in our Saviour's time, were so weak or so corrupt, as to lay more stress upon the ceremonial precepts of the law respecting sacrifices, and the like, than upon the moral part of it, which commanded those things which in themselves were only acceptable to God. They thought to please God by the multitude of their sacrifices, by being nicely scrupulous and exact in the observation of rites and ceremonies, and even by exceeding in them; but did not duly consider, that it was only judgment, mercy and faith, or the love of God, that was truly acceptable to him, and so they too commonly neglected those weightier matters of the law, and the more they neglected those, the more they thought to please and atone the Almighty by those carnal ordinances which were only imposed on them till the time of reformation. Their erring
so

SERM. who would not hear when God teaches?

XI. When the divine Being vouchsafes to instruct us for our good, how ready should we be to learn and obey? His appearance on this account, and summoning the people together to hear him, is most magnificently described in the six first verses, *The mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken, and called the earth (or the land) from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof, (i. e. from the east and from the west.) Out of Zion the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people, q. d. What God has to declare to his people, is so solemn and important a thing, that heaven and earth shall be called upon to bear record, or witness to it; as is usual in solemn cases, to stir up attention in those whom the discourse does concern: Thus Deut. xxxii. 1. Moses says, Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear O earth, the words of my mouth. And Isaiah, chap. i. 2. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The Psalmist then goes on thus: Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice, i. e. the House of Israel:*

And

And how they made a covenant with God SERM.
by sacrifice, we may all see, *Exod. xxiv.* XI.

4—8. *And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words. Thus the house of Israel made a covenant with God by sacrifice, whence it is, that they are here summoned under this character: Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is judge himself, Selah. God being there represented as appearing, and the people gathered together to hear him, he solemnly declares to them what were the things that were well-pleasing unto him, and wherein his true service consists; not in sacrifices, external oblations, or any kind of ceremonies, but in prayer,*
P 2 *thankf-*

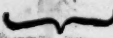
SERM. thanksgiving and obedience, or in a sincere

XI. and right disposition and behaviour towards him: And first, he in a very beautiful and elegant manner, sets before them the vanity of their multitude of sacrifices, when they placed their religion in them, or thought by that means alone to please God, *ver. 7—13. Hear, O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me; (or as it may be read) they have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?* After he had thus exposed their pompous ceremonial worship, he commands them to apply themselves to the practice of those things, which were truly in themselves acceptable to him, *ver. 14, 15. Offer unto God thanksgiving, i. e. Acknowledge with a suitable temper of mind all his mercies and favours towards thee, and pay thy vows unto the most high; (perform that obedience which thou hast vowed and promised unto him.) Israel vowed obedience to God, as in that fore-*
cited

cited passage in *Exod. xxiv.* when they said, *SERM.*
All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and XI.
be obedient. Christians vow obedience to
 God in their baptism: And it is usual for
 persons under affliction, to resolve and pro-
 mise, that they will, for the future, live in
 obedience to God's commands. Now this
 obedience, which we lie under a natural ob-
 ligation to perform, antecedent to any ex-
 press promises or engagements of our own,
 yet becomes more incumbent upon us, from
 such promises and engagements, whenever,
 or however made; and therefore such reso-
 lutions, vows and protestations of obedience
 to God, we are above all things concerned
 to make good and perform *Offer unto God*
thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most
high; which words are followed by those of
 our text. *And call upon me in the day of*
trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt
glorify me.

These words then are spoken to the nation
 or people of *Israel*; but, nevertheless, they
 contain matter of very useful instruction for
 all people, persons and times; and therefore
 I have chosen to treat of them at this time.
 By their connexion with the foregoing *verse*,
 we may see what are the qualifications that
 are necessary in persons who would call upon
 God, or pray unto him after an acceptable
 manner, so as to have their prayers heard,
 and their requests granted. It is very cer-

SERM. tain that God does not regard the prayers of

XI.  some persons, but has a gracious respect to the prayers of others. They whose prayers God will not hear, are the wicked and ungodly, who love sin, and live in the practice of it. *If I regard iniquity in my heart,* says the Psalmist, *the Lord will not hear me.* And tho' such persons be ever so exact in the observance of rites and ceremonies, yet that will avail nothing towards rendering their prayers acceptable to God; for even *the sacrifices of the wicked are abomination to the Lord*; and tho' here persons under such qualifications, as we shall mention presently, are exhorted to call upon God, and are assured that he will hear them; yet, where those qualifications are wanting, how punctual soever men may be in outward ceremonious worship, it is declared that their prayers will signify nothing; for to such persons God says, *Isa. i. 15. When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear.* See likewise the ver. following our text, *But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? That thou shouldest plead or make mention of the covenant between me and thee, which thou hast broken, and continuest still to break.* But then they whose prayers God will hear, are the penitent, the humble, the obedient,
and

and the righteous. God often indeed is so SERM.
gracious as to hear the prayers of those who XI.
have continued a great while in a course of

fin; but then it is upon their repentance and resolutions of amendment, when they humble themselves before God, and from a sense of their sins are truly humble for them, and disposed to forsake them. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise,* says the Psalmist, *Psal. li. 17. The prayer of the upright is his delight; his eyes are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; whilst the sacrifice of the wicked, of those who continue in a course of sin, is an abomination to the Lord, and his face is against them that do evil, or that continue to do so without repentance.* So that he hears only the prayers of the righteous, or of those who are sincerely disposed and resolved to be so; whilst he rejects the prayers of the wicked, and of hypocrites, who, whilst they pretend obedience to God in rites and ceremonies, do not scruple to disobey him in those things which above all things else he requires of them. And therefore, after he had exposed their numerous sacrifices and ceremonies, he says, *Offer unto God thanksgiving*, or a confession (as it is in the original) which may signify either a confession of praise to God in a grateful acknowledgment of his mercies, as it often does, or a penitent

SERM. confession of sin : *Offer unto God a confession,*

XI. *and pay thy vows unto the Most High; and*
call upon me (or then call upon me) in the
day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou
shalt glorify me, q. d. Do not think that I
 will regard the multitude of thy sacrifices, so
 as to be induced thereby to hear thy prayers
 in distress, and deliver thee from trouble,
 whilst thou continuest to transgress my laws,
 and disobey my will; but, instead of offer-
 ing so many sacrifices and burnt-offerings to
 me, offer the sacrifice of a thankful, devout
 and penitent mind, and perform that obedi-
 ence to my commands, which thou hast
 vowed and promised; and then call upon me
 in the time of thy distress, and I will gra-
 ciously regard and hear thy prayers, and will
 deliver thee; but take care, when thou art
 delivered, that thou testify the sincerity of
 thy repentance and turning to me, by glori-
 fying me thy deliverer, as thou oughtest to
 do.

Here then, *1st*, The people of *Israel* are
 exhorted and commanded to call upon God
 in the day of trouble, *i. e.* with a suitable
 temper of mind to pray to him in times of
 difficulty, danger, distress and anxiety, for
 protection, preservation and deliverance; for
 this is the frequent meaning of calling upon
 God in scripture, which is so manifest, that
 I need not turn you to particular places for
 the proof of it. *2^{dly}*. God promises, upon
 their

their thus calling upon him, or praying to him, to rescue, deliver and save them; *I will deliver thee.* 3dly. It is declared what use they should make of the divine deliverance and salvation; they should glorify God thereupon, should render all praise, honour and obedience to him. *I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* SERM. XI.

Now, in farther treating on these words, I shall endeavour to shew,

I. That God is the Saviour, the great preserver and deliverer of men.

II. That therefore in times of danger, distress, affliction and calamity, we should implore his salvation and deliverance.

III. That when God is graciously pleased to save and deliver us, it should be our greatest concern, as it is our indispensable duty, to glorify him in all our actions.

I. I am to shew that God is the Saviour, the great preserver and deliverer of men. Now this will appear from reason, from experience and observation, and from the holy scriptures.

1st, That God is the great Saviour and deliverer of men, may appear from reason, and the consideration of the divine providence, the reality of which may be very easily proved. As God made and created all things,
and

SERM. and 'tis by his influence that they are constant-

XI. ly supported, upheld and maintained, so it is

most reasonable to think, that he rules and governs, that he orders and disposes all things in such manner as in his wisdom he knows to be most meet and fit. The providence of God is as certain, as that all things were created by him : And as from this visible frame of things, and from our own existence, we may most rationally conclude that there is a God, who by his power made all things, and still upholds and sustains them by his influence ; so we may as rationally conclude, that this great author and maintainer of the universe is concerned to manage and conduct all the parts of it, and to order them all for the best. God is an omnipresent being ; he is every where, he fills all places, all persons and things ; in him we live, and move, and have our being ; he is almighty, has all power, and can do whatsoever he pleaseth ; and he is omniscient, he has a perfect knowledge of all persons and things, and is thoroughly acquainted with their several natures, conditions and circumstances ; and so nothing is wanting in him, as to his presence, his power, or his skill, for managing and disposing the concerns of all his creatures ; he is absent from none of them, for he is every where present ; nothing is too great for his power, for he can do every thing ; nothing is hid from his knowledge, for he knows all things ; so that

if any thing be wanting in him, it must be a will to take care of his creatures ; but this we are sure cannot be wanting in him, since he is a being perfectly good, as may be demonstrated from his very nature, or those natural perfections which we are sure he possesses in a manner far above our conceptions. And it is inconsistent with reason to imagine, that a being possessed of such perfections, and who at the same time must be all-wise, and perfectly good, and righteous ; I say, it is inconsistent with reason, and the highest absurdity, to suppose that such a being should not extend his care to all the works of his hands, so as to govern them, and to order and dispose them in the fittest manner, according to their natures, and his own most wonderful perfectness. It is true, he usually works by second causes ; but even these are not only originally ordained, but are constantly upheld and directed by him, and he has often interposed in an extraordinary manner, contrary to the usual course of them. Now as the divine being extends his care to all his works, so he does to this earth, or our world in particular, and to every thing in it ; and as his care is exercised over the insensitive, and the brute creation, so man, the most excellent part of his workmanship in this lower world, is especially interested therein. He *preserveth men and beast*, but man in an especial manner, whose moral actions
God

SERM.
XI.

SERM. God has a principal regard to ; and if he
XI. does not reward or punish them here, he
will do it hereafter. Divine providence is chiefly, and in an eminent manner, concerned for nations, communities and bodies of men, in which mankind subsists ; but yet it is really concerned likewise even for every individual person. As the whole is preferable to a part, so God takes the chiefest care of the whole ; but yet not the least part is excluded from his care. As not a sparrow falls on the ground without him, so we may be certain that not a man does, who is of more value than many sparrows. And let not any one think, that the disorders that appear in human affairs are any just objection to the reality of a providence ; for most of these disorders arise from the vices and follies of men, or are the natural and penal effects of them ; otherwise they are mostly but seeming, and not real disorders. The providence of God has frequently been seen in bringing evils and calamities, or permitting them to come upon a people for their wickedness ; which, unless they have made themselves really ripe for destruction, are designed for their reformation ; and they are always designed for the good of those about them, that, being warned, they may avoid their crimes, and so escape the punishment. And as the care our Maker has for us appears in various instances in doing us good in many respects,

respects, continually providing for us, and S E R M.
the like; so it is particularly exercised in pre- XI.

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serving us in the midst of the many dangers we are liable to, and delivering us from those miseries, afflictions and calamities that actually invade us. Deliverances and preservations are certainly some of the main instances of that divine providence which is continually engaged for our good; the care the divine Being exercises over us, being the effect of his love, and kindness, and good-will towards us, must frequently discover itself this way, and indeed, as often as in his wisdom he sees it to be fit. Now, as the kind providence of God extends itself to all men, so it is particularly and more eminently engaged for those who fear, and love, and serve him, and with a suitable temper of mind call upon him in their trouble and distress: He is peculiarly nigh unto them that call upon him, to all them that call upon him in truth; and his eyes are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; if he does not deliver them out of trouble, he will be with them in trouble, to sustain, and strengthen, and comfort them, to revive their hearts, and to uphold them with the right-hand of his righteousness; and whenever it is for their real good to be delivered, he will deliver them; which is all we need understand by the promise in our text, when applied to particular persons, *Call upon me in the day of trouble,*

SERM. *trouble, I will deliver thee.* Tho' when un-

XI. derstood as belonging to the people of *Israel*,
 (as it was really a promise made to them, as we have seen) then it may be understood strictly and absolutely, according to the many temporal promises made to that people, that if they did really humble themselves, and return to the Lord with their whole hearts, then God would return unto them, and would deliver them from those temporal evils and calamities which he had brought upon them for their sins. But this by the by; from what has been said, we may see, that as the providence of God extends over all, so he must be the great Saviour, preserver and deliverer of men.

2dly, This may also appear from experience and observation. Every preservation and deliverance that we experience ourselves, or observe others to have been blessed with, every salvation, or remarkable providence of that nature that we are witnesses of, or that we hear or read of, is a sensible and plain demonstration, that God is the great preserver and deliverer of men. For preservations and deliverances from evil and calamity, however brought about by second causes, are originally owing to God; he is the first and supreme cause of them. If we or any are delivered and preserved, it is God that is our great deliverer and preserver. As it is to him that we originally owe all the good things

things we partake of, or enjoy, so we ought to acknowledge, that all our deliverances and salvations, of what kind soever they be, do come originally from him, and have him for their supreme author and first cause. And truly the deliverances that we and others are blessed with are very many and great. There be various instances of God's preserving and delivering men, and especially nations of men, from impending and actual calamities, and some within our own time and memory. The nation of the *Jews* was frequently delivered after a very remarkable manner, and was blessed with many wonderful salvations; tho', indeed, as has been already hinted, there was some difference between them and other nations, upon the account of God's being their king in a peculiar manner, their civil or political head; so that as they were sometimes more remarkably punished, so they were at other times more remarkably saved and delivered than other nations. But notwithstanding this, God was then, as well as now, the God of the *Gentiles* as well as of the *Jews*, and his providence was often seen in preserving and delivering them also. And then, as to particular persons, we have many instances of signal deliverances that God was pleased to favour them with; as in the case of *Noah*, *Lot*, *Shadrach*, *Mesheck*, and *Abednego*, *Daniel*, *Paul*, and other saints and servants of God.

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XI.

SERM. God. And tho' such miraculous deliverances

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are not so common now, yet we may, perhaps, have observed many in our time, and some, even of our acquaintance and friends, have experienced very merciful preservations and deliverances. And then, as to ourselves, I believe there is scarce one of us, but has known, in some degree or other, what trouble and affliction is, either of a spiritual or temporal nature, and has been; in some degree or other, delivered from it. Some of us, it may be, have been cast down and dejected, and troubled from a sense of our sins, and the apprehensions of the divine displeasure, and God has delivered us from our fears by the gracious promises of his word, and has spoken peace to our souls, when we have been under the greatest anxiety and trouble. Some of us, it may be, have had the sentence of death in ourselves, and have been raised up again; others have met with disappointments, difficulties and perplexities in their worldly affairs, and have at last had them settled to their satisfaction; and again, others, perhaps, have been under fears and apprehensions on the account of near and dear relations and friends, and have been delivered from those fears and apprehensions. Now these and other instances of deliverances and salvations, which we have experienced ourselves, or have observed in others, do plainly

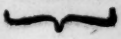
plainly shew, that God is the great preserver and deliverer of men. But, SERM.
XI.

3dly, This is farther manifest from the abundant declarations of holy scripture. As reason, and experience, and observation prove that God is the deliverer and preserver of men, so this is the voice of the holy scriptures, which every where celebrate and proclaim his goodness on this account. Thus he is very frequently called a Saviour both in the old and new Testament; as 1 Tim. iv. 10. *For therefore we both labour, and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.* Thus he is stiled the preserver of men, Job vii. 20. *I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?* And so he is said to preserve man and beast, Psal. xxxvi. 6. *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, thy judgments are a great deep; O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.* It follows in the next verse, *How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God? therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.* Thus David often calls God his deliverer, Psal. xl. ult. *But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me; thou art my help and my deliverer, make no tarrying, O my God.* And he often celebrates the goodness of God in delivering men, Psal. cvii. 17,—20. *Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted: Their*
Q
soul

SERM. *soul abhorreth all manner of meat ; and they*

XI. *draw near unto the gates of death. Then they*
cry unto the Lord in their trouble ; he saveth
them out of their distresses : He sent his word
and healed them ; and delivered them from
their destructions. And God is in an especial
manner the deliverer of the righteous : Thus
it is said, Psal. xxxiv. 19. Many are the af-
lictions of the righteous, but the Lord deliver-
eth them out of them all, i. e. either here or
in another state. Thus then we see, both
from reason, and the reality of the divine
providence, from experience and observation,
and from the numerous, repeated, and ex-
press declarations of the holy scriptures, that
God is the great saviour, preserver and deli-
verer of men ; and that salvation is of the
Lord.

II. I come now to shew, That as God is our preserver and deliverer, we ought, in times of danger, distress, affliction and calamity, to implore the divine deliverance and salvation. That this is a duty, I think, can hardly be denied by any who believe the providence of God : For tho' it is true, that whether we prayed or no, an all-wise and all-good being would do every thing for the best ; yet it is as true, that some qualifications are necessary in us, in order to a right and suitable reception of his favours, and unless we are in some measure prepared for them, we have no good reason to expect them :

them : And how our minds can be prepared SERM.
to receive them, unless we are disposed humb- XI.
ly to ask them at God's hands, I know not. 

As we depend on God for every good thing, and we live on his bounty and kindness, so we ought to look up to him for the enjoyment of all blessings, and to ask of him whatever we stand in need of ; and as it is by him that we are saved and delivered from evil and danger, and without him we cannot be so delivered and saved, it must certainly be our duty, as well as interest, in all times of difficulty and distress, whether of a publick or private nature, most humbly and earnestly to pray, that he would be graciously pleased to deliver us out of it. God delights to bestow his blessings in this way, viz. the way of prayer, because it supposes us to be qualified, and rightly disposed and prepared to receive them, and to be fit objects of his favour, which they who have no regard to God as the great author of all our comfort and happiness cannot be. And therefore if this duty of prayer be rightly performed and practised, it is most likely to be crown'd with success. Thus in our text, God commands the *Israelites* to call upon him in the day of trouble, and thereupon promises to deliver them ; but that is, if they call upon him in sincerity and truth, and with a suitable temper and disposition of mind. Now, if we would perform this duty acceptably, and par-

SERM. particularly would have our prayers in the time
 XI. of national affliction, whether from war, famine, or pestilence, graciously heard and answered, they must proceed from a pure heart; for if we *regard iniquity in our hearts, God will not hear us*, as we observed before; they must be joined with a sense of our past follies and transgressions, whereby we have not only deserved the calamity we for the present labour under, but much greater, and with a sense of God's righteousness in afflicting us: They must be attended with resolutions of amendment, or a sincere desire to forsake the evil ways we have walk'd in, and hearty purposes and endeavours to walk so for the future as to please God; they must be joined with a humble hope and trust in God, whose *tender mercies are over all his works*; and with resignation to his will, and a patient waiting for him: For after all we must acquiesce in the will of God, and should be ready to say with our Saviour, *Not my will, but thine be done*. And we have the example of *David* for a patient waiting for God, *Psal. xl. 1. I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry*. In short, we may learn from a heathen king, the king of *Nineveh*, with what temper of mind we should pray to God in times of danger, difficulty and distress; for after he had commanded all to cry mightily unto God, he adds, *Yea, let them turn every one*
from

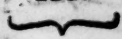
from his evil way, and from the violence that SERM.
is in their hands; who can tell if God will turn XI.
and repent, and turn away from his fierce an-
ger, that we perish not? Jonah iii. 8, 9. If
 with this temper and disposition of mind,
 with these holy purposes, resolutions and en-
 deavours, which we have mentioned, we
 pray to God under affliction, we then glori-
 fy him in affliction; and so it is likely that
 God will deliver us, that we may still farther
 glorify him. If it be objected, that things
 being under the influences of second causes,
 will have their natural course, whether we
 pray or not; I answer, that many of these
 causes are very much hidden from us, and
 for ought we know, God, or invisible be-
 ings commissioned by him, may frequently
 act above them, or contrary to them, or,
 however, may in an extraordinary manner
 direct and dispose them. Therefore, as we
 ought to pray to God in every condition for
 every thing we want, so more especially
 should we in times of affliction and distress
 for deliverance from it. There are many
 examples of this in the holy scriptures, viz. of
 pious men and sincere penitents, who prayed
 earnestly for the divine preservation and de-
 liverance, as *David, Paul, &c.* And we
 are often called upon to the exercise of this
 duty; *Be careful for nothing,* says the a-
 postle, *but in every thing by prayer and sup-*
plication, with thanksgiving, let your request
be

SERM. *be made known unto God*, Phil. iv. 6. And

XI. in the Lord's Prayer we are taught to pray,

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. In short, as this is a natural duty, so it is very frequently recommended and inculcated in the word of God. Finally, As the divine blessing is promised to those who call upon God in sincerity and truth, so it is frequently declared, that God delivers such as so pray unto him; and there are many instances of success in the sincere exercise of this duty. Thus, *Psal. xxxiv. 4. I sought the Lord, says David, and he heard me, and delivered me out of all my fears.* Ver. 6. *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.* Ver. 17. *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.* And it is frequently repeated in the *cviith Psal. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble; and he delivered them out of their distresses.* Thus we see that it is both our duty and interest to implore the divine deliverance and salvation in times of affliction, calamity and distress; and that if we do this with a suitable temper of mind, it is the most likely way to obtain deliverance from them.

III. When God is graciously pleased to save and deliver us, it should be our greatest concern, as it is our indispensable duty, to glorify him on this account. This even
grati-

gratitude obliges us to. It is in many re-
S E R M .
pects incumbent upon us to glorify God ; XI.
we are obliged to it by our relation to him, 

and dependance on him, as his creatures.

As we receive our very being from him, and all the good we enjoy is owing to him, as the original author of it ; so it should be our chief business and our principal care to glorify him, and to render to him, to the best of our power, according to the benefits he has bestowed upon us ; though still, all that we can do, will come vastly short of what is due to him. To glorify God is one main end of our being ; we were made to glorify him, and he has laid us under innumerable obligations so to do ; and among the rest, the deliverances he is pleased from time to time to favour us with, do loudly call upon us to glorify him. *Salvation*, we have heard, *is of the Lord* ; if at any time we are saved and delivered, (as in some sense we constantly are) it is God who saves us and delivers us ; and certainly we shall be guilty of the worst ingratitude, if we are not hereby-induced to honour and glorify *him*, our great preserver and deliverer. If we forget his benefits herein, we shall have just reason to fear, that he who once graciously preserved and delivered us, will do so no more, but will leave us to be overwhelmed with the terrible apprehensions of his wrath, and so perish under the burden of

SERM. our afflictions and calamities. The great end

XI. and design of God in preserving and delivering us is, that we might live to his glory, and might shew forth his praises; *I will deliver thee*, says he to *Israel*, and *thou shalt glorify me*; or, that thou mightest glorify me: Not that any advantage accrues to the divine Being hereby, far be it from us to think that; but all this is required for our own good. Now we glorify God, *1st*, When we praise him, and give thanks unto him for his mercies. *2dly*, and chiefly, when his goodness induces us to become his sincere servants, and to live in obedience to him. Both these are exprest together in the last verse of this Psalm. *Whoso offereth me praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God.*

1st, We glorify God for the deliverances and salvations he is pleased to favour us with, when we praise him and give thanks unto him for them. Hereby, we in a solemn manner, acknowledge him to be our deliverer, and expressly ascribe to him the glory that is due unto his name on that account. As we ought to pray for deliverance from distress, and preservation from dangers, so we ought to return the most humble and hearty thanks to God, when we are so delivered and preserved, and should bless and praise his name for it. As in every thing we should give thanks, so we should especially

cially in this, and not forget the divine benefits to us in this respect, so as to neglect to render praise on this occasion to him to whom all praise is due. We are exhorted, in the verse preceding our text, to *offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most high*; and *David* is frequently resolving to bless and magnify the name of God for the salvations he had been favoured with. *Pf. xxxiv. beginning, I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth*; and, ver. 3. *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together*: It follows in the next verse, *I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears*. This it what he was so earnest in blessing the Lord for, and calling upon others to join him therein. Thus also *Pf. cxvi. 12, 13, 14. having experienced a wonderful deliverance, he breaks out, What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now in the presence of all his people. And, ver. 17. he says, I will offer to thee, the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the Lord. See also Pf. ciii. beginning, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name; Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases: who*

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SERM. *who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who*

XI. *crowneeth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies, &c.* As we ought to bless God for

all the advantages and comforts of life, which he is the original author of; so it is highly reasonable we should praise and magnify him, when we escape any danger, are delivered from any calamity, or released and freed from any affliction. As there cannot be a right temper of mind towards God, where prayer is wanting, so none can be rightly disposed and affected towards him where praise and thanksgiving for mercies are wanting. Thus then one instance of glorifying God, is by offering praise and thanksgiving unto him.

2dly, We chiefly, and above all, glorify God for his salvation and deliverance, when we are thereby induced to become and continue his sincere servants, and live in obedience to him: When we order our conversation aright before him, and are so mindful of the vows and promises we made in the time of our affliction as to perform them: When our resolutions of amendment do not go off with our trouble, but issue in sincere endeavours to be holy in all manner of conversation. When a sense of the divine goodness in delivering us, does so continue on our minds, as constantly to dispose us to walk so as to please God. This is, after all, the best and
the

the only effectual way of glorifying God, when we praise him not only with our lips but in our lives. And this effect, all the instances of the divine goodness should have upon us, *viz.* to make us more holy, more obedient to the will of God, more kind, and merciful, and charitable to our fellow-creatures; and finally, more like God in all his moral perfections. Particularly, we should be induced by the love of God in delivering us out of our troubles and afflictions, to comfort others under their afflictions, and to contribute what we can towards delivering them out of them. Thus we shall *be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful*; and thus we shall answer the end of God's delivering us, which is, that we may be to his glory, by being farther useful and exemplary in the world, and may be induced by his goodness and mercy extended to us, to love him more, and serve him better than ever we did before; and finally, to be *filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God*. Thus we see that when God is graciously pleased to save and deliver us, it should be our greatest concern, as it is our indispensable duty, to glorify him on that account, by offering praise and thanksgiving unto him, and more especially by ordering our conversation aright before him.

SERM.

I shall now proceed to make some application, and so conclude.

XI.

1.

If God be such a being as we have mentioned, such a Saviour and deliverer, then how happy are they who have an especial interest in him, and have him for their God? Who can say, this God is my God, this Saviour is my Saviour, this deliverer is my deliverer! O happy is the man who is in such a case, whose God is the Lord, the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength. And who is this happy man, but the sincerely righteous man, who endeavours all he can to obey the commands of God, and to be like unto him. The righteous have a peculiar interest in God, and he takes a special care of them. *The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; he loveth the righteous, and his countenance does behold the upright.* He is especially concerned either to protect and preserve them, or to uphold and sustain them, or to save and deliver them, or finally, to make all things work together for their good; to guide them through all the various changes and occurrences of life, and to bring them at last unto glory. His providence, indeed, is universal, and extends over all his works; and even the wicked partake of many of the kind instances of it: He does good unto all, even unto the unthankful and the evil; *he causeth*

causeth his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. But all this is in a general way, and notwithstanding this, *the face of the Lord is against them that do evil*, whilst they continue to do it; and he is angry and displeased with the wicked every day. But the good and righteous are interested in his favour, and his power, and wisdom, and faithfulness, is engaged for them; his providence is peculiarly concerned for them; and though they may not be distinguished from the wicked, in the enjoyment of outward blessings here, yet they may be sure, that God does what he knows to be fittest and best for them, and if they continue his sincere servants, will *guide them by his counsel, and afterwards receive them to glory.* This the righteous may depend upon, this they may humbly expect, and even lay claim to, by virtue of those gracious promises that God has made to them. Now, to have so good and gracious a being, so wise a protector and preserver, and so powerful a Saviour and deliverer, engaged for them, must give them the greatest comfort, joy and satisfaction; such persons may be joyful in the Lord, and be glad in him at all times, and so are in a truly happy condition. O therefore, let us become the sincere servants of God, that we may be thus entitled to his special care, providence
and

SERM.

XI.

SERM. and protection ; for happy is every one
 XI. whose God is the Lord.

2. Let us here take occasion to reflect a little on that great and wonderful deliverance which we enjoy through the gospel of Christ. We have been treating chiefly of temporal deliverances and salvations from trouble and affliction here ; and though the goodness of God is very often seen in this, yet this is nothing, when compared with that great, that eternal salvation, which the gospel brings, and which God sent his Son into the world to procure for us. Through Christ in the gospel, we obtain deliverance from sin, from the habits and reigning power of it, and from the guilt and punishment of it ; *he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, as you lately heard ; being justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath through him, are delivered from condemnation, and have all our sins forgiven ; if we take care to lead a life agreeable to the gospel, to walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit : And he will at last redeem us from death, and ransom us from the power of the grave, and deliver us from hell and eternal destruction ; and this salvation which we obtain, and shall obtain through Christ, will be joined with eternal glory. O therefore, let us give thanks unto the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation,

folation, who *has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.* SERM. XI.

3. Let us endeavour to glorify God for all the deliverances and salvations he is pleased to favour us with, and especially for this last great one we have mentioned. Let us bless and praise *him*, who continually preserves us, and redeems our life from destruction, who has delivered our *soul from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling.* Let us never forget the loving-kindness of the Lord, nor the many mercies he has extended to us, but let us call upon our souls, and all that is within us, to bless and praise his name, on the account of them. Let a grateful sense of his exceeding great goodness in delivering and preserving us be continually upon our mind, that we may make mention of his loving-kindness upon all occasions; and more especially that we may be induced to glorify him in our whole life and conversation. Let his goodness lead us effectually to repentance, and induce us so to walk as to please him. It may be in the time of our affliction and distress, we resolved and promised to serve the Lord if he would spare and deliver us; O therefore, let not these vows and promises be forgotten, but be seriously remembered and considered by us, so as to be put in practice. How can we think
of

SERM. of going on to offend our kind preserver and

XI. merciful deliverer; how can we be guilty
 of such base ingratitude, how can we be so
 wicked, yea, how can we be such enemies to
 ourselves! For if we go on in sin, after such
 wonderful expressions of the divine goodness
 to us, we have just reason to fear, that God
 may send yet greater calamities upon us, than
 those we have been delivered from, and which
 is saddest of all, that we shall at last perish in
 our sins; for as to the deliverance which the
 gospel brings, how shall we escape! There-
 fore let us not be so foolish, wicked, and un-
 grateful; but let us turn to the Lord with
 our whole hearts, and endeavour to shew
 forth his praises, who hath saved and deliver-
 ed us, not only with our mouths, but in our
 life and conversation, which should be con-
 stantly directed to his glory, who has done
 such great things for us.

Lastly, If we would make use of the divine
 deliverances and salvations, which we have
 experienced, then we may depend upon the
 goodness of this great deliverer for the future.
 We have heard how we should behave our-
 selves so as to glorify God in affliction, or in a
 day of trouble, and with what temper of mind
 we should call upon him for deliverance; and
 also, how we should behave ourselves, so as
 to glorify him when we are delivered. If
 therefore, upon our sincere prayer, we have
 been

been delivered from any trouble or affliction, SERM.
or may be hereafter delivered ; this may give XI.
us very great encouragement to hope still in
God ; and hereby our trust and confidence
in him, may be strengthened and increased :
But this cannot be, unless we endeavour to
make a right use of the divine deliverance
vouchsafed unto us, and to live to the praise
and glory of that God, who has saved and
delivered us. Let us therefore, be especially
careful to do this, and then we may hope and
trust in God as long as we live ; may expect
relief and comfort from him, under all the
evils we may be still liable to, and deliver-
ance from them, whenever it may be for our
real good ; and, finally, may be sure that we
shall share in the great deliverance and salva-
tion, which *Christ is the author of, to all them
that obey him : For the Lord will speak peace
to his people, and to his saints ; but then, if
they would secure these blessings, let them
not turn again to folly.*

S E R M O N XII.

CHRIST manifested, and Obedience
to him commanded.

MATT. xvii. 5. lat. part.

*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well
pleased ; hear ye him.*

SERM. XII. **I**N the foregoing chapter we are told, that
our Saviour, coming into the coasts of
Cesarea Philippi, asked his disciples, what
opinion men generally entertained concern-
ing him, and who they gave out he was?
Whereto they answered, That *some said he*
was John the Baptist ; some Elias ; and others
Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Where-
upon he asked them again, who they thought
he was? And when *Simon Peter* answered,
that he was *the Christ, the Son of the living*
God, Jesus pronounced him blessed, and gave
him a promise, that he should be one of the
chief ministers in his kingdom ; but withal
charged his disciples, that *they should tell no*
man, that he was Jesus the Christ: For all
this

this was said privately, and if our Saviour, or SERM.
his intimate friends and constant followers XII.
had given out in exprefs terms, that he was
the Messiah, by which word the *Jews* under-
stood a temporal and worldly king, who
was to rule over them, they would thereby,
from their constant hatred and dislike of him,
have taken advantage against him before his
hour was come; this therefore our Lord,
with admirable wisdom and prudence, con-
stantly guarded against. And here, therefore,
that he might direct his disciples thoughts
from what they had been talking about, in
relation to his being the Messiah, and might
beat them off from the false expectation of a
temporal kingdom to be set up by him, he
begins, *ver. 21*, to acquaint them, that he must
suffer many things at *Jerusalem*, and at last
be killed; and, *ver. 24*, that his followers
must be so far from expecting temporal ad-
vantages, power, and grandeur under his go-
vernment, that they must deny themselves,
and take up their cross, and lose their lives
for his sake. To induce them to which, he
sets before them the consideration of the last
judgment, and of the future rewards and pu-
nishments to be administred by him, *ver. 25*,
26, 27. For whosoever will save his life, shall
lose it: And whosoever will lose his life for my
sake, shall find it. For what is a man profit-
ed, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose
his own soul? Or what shall a man give in

R 2exchange

SERM. exchange for his soul? For the Son of man
 XII. shall come in the glory of his Father, with his
 angels: And then he shall reward every man
 according to his works. And to confirm this,
 that he should at last execute this part of his
 government, he tells them, that there were
 some standing there, which should not taste of
 death, till they saw the Son of man coming in
 his kingdom, i. e. till they saw him setting up
 his spiritual kingdom, in the dispensation of
 the gospel, or more thoroughly establishing
 his kingdom, in the destruction of the Jewish
 polity. And of this his glory and authority,
 he gives them, six days after, a sort of a type
 or representation in his transfiguration, of
 which we have an account in the beginning
 of the following chapter. After six days,
 Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his bro-
 ther, and bringeth them up into an high moun-
 tain apart, and was transfigured before them:
 And his face did shine as the sun, and his rai-
 ment was white as the light. And behold,
 there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talk-
 ing with him. Then answered Peter, and said
 unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here:
 If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles;
 one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for
 Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright
 cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice
 out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved
 Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him,
 &c.

Obedience to him commanded.

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&c. *Moses* and *Elias* must give way to Christ, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* SERM. XII.

In the words of our text we have,

- I. A testimony of God the Father concerning his Son Jesus Christ, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*
- II. His command, grounded on this testimony, *hear ye him*; which was given immediately to the three disciples then with *Jesus*, but belonged also to the rest of his disciples, and concerns us all, who have the gospel offered to them, with sufficient evidence and authority; only there is this difference, that the apostles and other disciples then heard him immediately, having personal conversation with him; but we must hear him in his word, which his servants, who had the holy spirit to bring all things to their remembrance, which he had said unto them, have faithfully committed to writing.

I. That we may be induced to hear the Lord Jesus Christ, let us consider the testimony that God here gives of him; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* As if he had said, this person, *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, is he of whom *Moses* in the law, and the prophets did write; he, whom I all along designed and promised from time to

SERM. time to send into the world, to declare my
 XII. will to men, and whom you *Jews* have al-
 ways expected, *viz.* the Messiah, whom I
 have sent to be the Saviour of the world, and
 the divine teacher of men; and *in him I am*
well pleased, i. e. I approve of him, and like
 him well, his undertaking and proceeding is
 entirely agreeable to my mind; he came to
 do my will, all that he says and does is ac-
 cording to my will, and by my authority.
 Thus our Saviour's coming into the world
 was well-pleasing to God, in token whereof
 he sent a multitude of the heavenly host to
 celebrate his birth. His doctrine was well-
 pleasing to him, and therefore he gave him
 works, even miraculous works to perform,
 which should bear witness to the truth of his
 mission. Thus our Saviour speaks, *John* viii.
 29. *He that sent me is with me: The Father*
hath not left me alone; for I do always those
things that please him. His laying down his
 life was agreeable to his will, as our Saviour
 again speaks, *John* x. 17. *Therefore doth my*
Father love me, because I lay down my life,
that I might take it up again. In token of
 this, God raised him from the dead, and ex-
 alted him at his own right-hand to be a
 Prince and a Saviour, and gave him a name
 which is above every name, and gave him to
 be the head over all things to the church.
 Thus *John the Baptist* says, *The Father loveth*
the Son, and hath given all things into his hand,
 John

Obedience to him commanded.

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John iii. 35. But, to return, let us consider S E R M.
a few things, whereby it appears, that Jesus XII.
Christ is the Messiah, or Son of God, whom
we ought to hear, according to this divine
testimony.

I. All the prophecies relating to the Messiah were exactly fulfilled in our Lord Jesus. The old Testament contains many prophecies concerning the Messiah, some more obscure, and some more plain and clear, and these all agree to our blessed Saviour; they exactly answer to the several circumstances of his birth, life, death, resurrection, and the like, and some of them can agree to no other. It will be too long to insist on all those prophecies of the old Testament that were fulfilled in our Saviour, or to shew the agreement between those prophecies and all the circumstances of his appearance; I shall only mention some that are most obvious and remarkable. As to his descent, he sprang from *Abraham*, and from *Judah*, and from *David*, according to the several promises that were made to them, that the Messiah should be of their race. As to the time of his birth, it was certainly agreeable to *Jacob's* prophecy, *Gen. xix. 10. The scepter shall not depart from Judah, &c.* and to the account we have of *Daniel's* weeks; and he was born while the second temple was yet standing, according to the prediction of *Haggai*, chap. ii. ver. 6, &c. The place of his birth was *Beth-*

R 4

lehem

SERM. *lehem* of *Judea*, agreeable to *Micah's* prophecy, *chap. v. 2.* and as to the manner of his birth, he was born of a virgin, according to the prophecy of *Isaiab*, *chap. vii. 14.* and then the meanness of his condition here, is so far from being an argument of his not being the Messiah, that this character was frequently foretold of the Messiah; particularly very largely in *Isa. liii.* and as to his death, with the circumstances of it, and his resurrection, these are in several places of the prophets predicted concerning the Messiah. Thus all the prophecies that related to the Messiah, did exactly agree to *Jesus of Nazareth*, our Saviour; and some of them so agreed to him, as that they could agree to no other person.

2. Several testimonies were given of him by voices from heaven, and by heavenly glory surrounding him; God in express words declared him to be his beloved Son, and so testified that he was the Messiah. We have three instances, in the gospel, of God's speaking to our Saviour, and testifying his mission from heaven. The first is at his baptism, when he was just entring on his publick ministry, at which time also the Holy Spirit visibly bore witness to him, *Matt. iii. 16, 17.* And *Jesus*, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove (not in the shape of a dove; but descending as a dove descends) and lighting upon him: And lo, a voice from

from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* The second instance SERM-
XII.

is at his transfiguration, when the same words were heard from heaven by *Peter, James and John*, with the addition of the precept, *hear ye him*, as in our text; and at this time he was also clothed with glory; he was transfigured before them, and *his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light*, Matt. xvii. beg. The last instance is just before his passion, *John xii. 28.* where, when he prayed, *Father, glorify thy name*, we are told, *There came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* To these testimonies from heaven may be added what came to pass at his crucifixion, as the extraordinary darkness, the rending of the vail, the earthquake, &c. which, when the centurion, and they that were with him saw, they said, *Truly this was the Son of God.*

3. That Jesus was the Messiah, or Son of God, appears by his miracles, and wonderful works, of which his life, during his ministry, was full. These were convincing proofs of his divine mission, and made it plainly appear, that he came from God. Our Saviour did the works of his Father, which shewed that he was sent by him, and made it most reasonable to believe that he was the Messiah. *John v. 36. But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works that the Father hath given me to finish,*
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SERM. *the same works that I do bear witness of me,*
 XII. *that the Father hath sent me.* The miracles

of Christ were very numerous, and were so open and manifest, that his greatest adversaries could never have the face to deny them. We have many general accounts of his miracles in the gospel, for they were too many to be all particularly recorded: He healed the sick, cured the lame, cleansed the lepers, gave sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, cast out devils, and raised the dead, and all this with a word, or a touch; this general account we often have, but many particular miracles are also recorded, which come under all these heads. And besides these miracles which he wrought on persons, he did many other wonderful works; he turned water into wine, stilled tempests, fed the people miraculously, and the like. And thus was *Jesus of Nazareth a man approved of God, by miracles, and wonders, and signs which God did by him.* And, as the apostle Peter speaks, *God anointed him with the Holy Ghost, and with power.*

4. That Jesus is the Messiah, or Son of God, appears by his resurrection from the dead; which article the apostle chiefly insisted on the belief of, it being necessary to the belief of his being the Messiah, and of consequence causing this belief. Our Saviour had more than once told his disciples, that, as he should be put to death, so he would

would rise again the third day ; and as that, SERM.
XII.
so this came to pass according to his predictions ; as he was put to death by the *Jews*, so on the third day he revived, and God raised him from the dead. If our Saviour had not risen again, the credit of his mission, and consequently of his doctrine, would soon have failed ; his enemies would have triumphed over him, and his friends would have looked upon themselves to be disappointed ; for after his death they soon fell into doubts and perplexities of mind, and they would no doubt have quickly forgotten him, had he not shewn himself to them alive again. See how doubtful the two disciples speak of him in their journey to *Emmaus*, *Luke xxiv. 21.* *But we trusted, that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel :* They believed once that he was the Messiah, but now their hopes of him were almost extinguished, they knew not what to think of him. But on the third day, as I said, after his death, he in an awful and glorious manner rose from the dead, and appeared to his disciples ; and so baffled the insults of his adversaries, and revived the hopes of his pious friends, and confirmed them in the belief that he was the Messiah, by frequent converse with them, at times, for forty days. Thus was that expression in the *Psalms* made good in him, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* And he was declared to be
the

SERM. *the Son of God with power, by the resurrection*
 XII. *from the dead, Rom. i. 4.* To this may be
 ~~~~~ added, his ascension into heaven in the sight  
 of his apostles.

5. To the same purpose we must consider the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of *Pentecost*, and at other times. Our Saviour had often promised his disciples, that he would send the Holy Spirit to them from the Father; and certainly, if he had not been the Son of God, in whom he was well pleased, he could never have made this promise good; if he had not been the Messiah, he could not have baptized with the Holy Ghost; but, as the apostle *Peter* says, *Being by the right-hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear, Acts ii. 33.* At the beginning of the same chapter we have an account of this wonderful transaction, viz. that on the day of *Pentecost*, a few days after our Lord's ascension, when the disciples were together, there came suddenly a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. And we have several

ral particular instances of the like nature, in SERM.  
the history of the *Acts*. XII.

6. Hereto we may add the miracles that the disciples and followers of Christ did in his name, as another proof of his being the Messiah. Our Saviour sent out his disciples to work miracles in *Judea* whilst he was with them on earth, and after his ascension they went out and did the same in all the world. He had promised, that those who believed on his name should have the power of doing wonderful works ; so that not only the apostles, and those that followed Christ on earth, but other believers also did miracles in his name after his departure hence. This served wonderfully to confirm the truth of his resurrection, and so of his being the Messiah. We have an account of some particular miracles of the apostles, which they wrought openly in several parts of the world, conveyed down to us ; and many, very many more they did, which are not particularly recorded ; they healed the sick, cured the lame, cast out devils, raised the dead, and the like. And that they should do these miracles in the name of Jesus, after his death, and resurrection, and ascension, was certainly an argument that God had made him both Lord and Christ.

7. To what has been said, we must add, as a further confirmation that Jesus is the Son of God, or the Messiah, that the doctrine  
4 which

SERM. which he delivered, and the religion which

XII. he established, is altogether pure and reasonable, and worthy of God. This indeed, of itself, is no proof, for a person may teach very good things, and yet not do it by virtue of such a divine commission; but this, together with the foregoing considerations, is of great weight, and even absolutely necessary. For whatever miracles were wrought to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, if his doctrine was manifestly unreasonable and unworthy the divine Being, they ought not to be of any force; but if, while all other things concur to prove him to be the Messiah, his doctrine be every way good and just, there remains no doubt of the divine commission of its author. Thus have I considered how it appears that Jesus is the Son of God, or the Messiah, according to this divine testimony, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

II. I come now briefly to consider the divine precept, grounded on the foregoing testimony, *Hear ye him.* As Christ is the Son of God, the Messiah, the great Prophet that should come into the world to teach us, and to instruct us in the divine will, he ought certainly to be heard, *i. e.* in short, to be attended to, and obeyed.

In treating on this head, I shall,

1. Shew

1. Shew what it is that Christ teaches, wherein we ought to hear him.

2. How we should hear him.

1. What it is that Christ teaches us, and wherein we ought to hear him. The whole doctrine of Christ may be supposed to be contained under these general heads.

1. His precepts and instructions, that respect our practice.

2. Those that respect our belief.

3. His threatnings.

4. His promises.

1<sup>st</sup>, We should hear Christ in his precepts, or in those things which he commands us to observe in our practice. As our Saviour came into the world with a design to reform it, so, for this end, he delivered to men precepts and directions full of holiness, justice and goodness, for the ordering of their actions. Some of the precepts of Christ are indeed merely positive, but most of them are of a moral nature. The positive precepts of Christ are these two, *viz.* that of baptism, and the Lord's supper; and here we ought to hear Christ, so as to perform these ordinances regularly, according to his appointment. Baptism should be administered in such a manner, and to such persons, as he has directed, and for these ends and purposes which he has designed; and the same is to be



SERM. be observed of the Lord's supper; and all manner of moral duties, respecting every condition and relation, are recommended in the gospel of Christ to very great advantage. Therein we are taught to exercise piety towards God, justice and charity to our neighbour, and temperance and sobriety with regard to ourselves. Christ teaches us to worship God in spirit and in truth, to love him, and trust in him, to pray to him, and to give him the highest adoration. He commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to be just, and merciful, and charitable, to do good to all as we have opportunity, to love our enemies, and to do to others as we would reasonably have them do to us. *Finally*, As to the government of ourselves, he would have us to be humble and modest, sober and temperate, patient and contented, to raise our thoughts above this world to the reward that is in heaven, to beware of covetousness, to take heed, least at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life. Now, all such precepts and directions as these, which Christ has given us, we ought to attend to, and sincerely to comply with.

*2dly*, We should hear Christ in those precepts and directions, with respect our belief. As the word of Christ ought to direct our practice, so it should also direct our faith. Whatever our Saviour has laid down in the gospel

gospel for truth, that we ought to receive, SERM.  
and to give our assent to be governed by; XII.  
tho' indeed some truths are of vastly more  
importance than others. In the gospel we  
are taught these important things, *viz.* what  
thoughts we should entertain concerning God,  
and his several attributes and perfections; and  
we are particularly directed to the belief of his  
wonderful grace and mercy displayed in that  
dispensation, and in our redemption wrought  
out by Jesus Christ. The gospel leads us to  
believe in Christ, to believe Jesus to be the  
Messiah, the Son of God, our Saviour and  
lawgiver, our king and judge. It requires  
us to believe the resurrection of the dead, and  
the judgment to come. Thus we should  
hear Christ as to what we ought to believe.

3dly, We should hear Christ in his threat-  
nings. As Christ has delivered laws to us,  
so he has guarded them with sanctions, and  
has added threatenings to the breach of them;  
and these threatenings are of the severest pu-  
nishment to be inflicted, not in this world,  
but in that which is to come. Christ has re-  
vealed the wrath of God against all ungodli-  
ness and unrighteousness of men. No less  
than everlasting destruction, eternal perdition,  
and the dreadful effects of the wrath to come  
are threatened in the gospel to the impeni-  
tent, and to obstinate unbelievers. These  
threatenings are designed to deter us from sin,  
and to reduce us to obedience; and they  
S ought

SERM. ought to influence us, so as to make us avoid  
 XII. every thing that is unlawful, and to prevail  
 on us to comply with the laws of Christ.

*4thly*, We should also hear Christ in his promises. As the threatenings of the gospel are designed to affright us from sin, so the promises of it are made to encourage us in obeying the precepts of Christ, and to excite us to the practice of holiness and righteousness; and we ought so to hear Christ in these promises, as to be induced thereby to become his sincere followers. The promises of the gospel are very many, and great, they are exceeding great and precious promises, they are all of a spiritual and heavenly nature, they deserve our greatest regard and attention, and should, as they well might, prevail on us to be holy. The forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and a blessed immortality are promised in the gospel, through Christ, to the penitent believer. *Finally*, Deliverance from all kind of evil, and the enjoyment of the highest happiness for ever, are therein assigned for the portion of every sincere christian. Thus we see what Christ teaches us, and wherein we ought to hear him.

2. Let us now consider how he is to be heard by us.

*1st*, We should hear Christ impartially, *i. e.* we should have a due regard for all the truths which he has declared. We should not only mind those parts of his doctrine which

which suit most our humour, or natural disposition, but we should have respect to those parts of it also which thwart our natural inclination, and cross our worldly advantage. SERM. XII.

We should regard what he would have us practice, as well as what he requires us to believe, and should mind his threatenings as well as his promises. We should not neglect any precept of the gospel, nor disregard any divine truth. All that Christ has said should be attended to by us, and every precept of his doctrine should have due influence on us. We ought to lay aside all prejudice in the study of his word, and to make as good a judgment of it as we can, according to the best of our knowledge; and should take care that we be not too partial or insincere in our obedience to his will.

*2dly*, We should hear Christ with diligence. Diligence is necessary in any good work whatsoever, if we would perform it as we ought; much more is it necessary in so great and important an affair, as this duty before us, which contains all manner of good works. We should not hear Christ with a careless and negligent disposition, but we should attend to what he has declared to us, with care and application of mind. Diligence is necessary in order to understand aright what Christ has said to us; diligence is necessary in order to remember it; and dili-



SERM. gence is necessary, if we would embrace it,  
 XII. and put it in practice and persevere in it.

3dly, We should hear him only. We should hear no one else in religious matters; we may hear them for instruction, but not to build our faith upon what they say; we should own no other Lord over our consciences; he only has power to make laws in religion, or the service of God, and he only ought to be obeyed herein. The commandments of men, in the worship of God, should be disregarded by us; their promises and threatenings in religious matters should not affect us. If any one will pretend to teach us, by adding to Christ's laws, and by taking from them, or any ways altering them, we should disregard him, and turn away from him, and not hear him in it: Neither should we hear any one that would interpose his own interpretation of Christ's laws on us; for that is but making Christ's laws his own laws, and claiming that respect from us that is due to Christ only. But let us not *call any one rabbi, or master on earth, seeing one is our master, even Christ.*

4thly, Tho' I have all along almost taken this to be the import of the words, it may nevertheless be proper to mention it by itself, viz. that we ought to hear the word of Christ so, as to do it. All our hearing should be in order to our instruction, and all our  
 instruction

instruction should be in order to practice. SERM.  
 Thus *James*, chap. i. 22. *Be ye doers of the* XII.  
*word, and not hearers only, deceiving your*  
*own selves, &c.* And our Saviour likens him  
 that hears his sayings, and does them, to a  
 wise man, and declares the safety, stability,  
 and happiness of such a one; but he that  
 hears his sayings, and does them not, he  
 likens to a foolish man, whose end will be  
 misery and ruin, *Matt.* vii. 24, 25, 26, 27.  
 Thus have I considered the duty of hearing  
 Christ the Son of God.

I shall now conclude with a few serious  
 reflections on what has been said.

1. We see here the truth and certainty of  
 the christian dispensation. 'Tis the Son of  
 God, who is the author of it, whom God  
 bore witness to from heaven. This very in-  
 stance of the transfiguration the apostle *Pe-*  
*ter* makes use of, to prove the certainty and  
 divine authority of the christian religion;  
*2 Pet.* i. 16, 17, 18. *For we have not fol-*  
*lowed cunningly devised fables, when we made*  
*known unto you the power and coming of our*  
*Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of*  
*his majesty; for he received from God the Fa-*  
*ther honour and glory, when there came such a*  
*voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is*  
*my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased:*  
*And this voice which came from heaven we*  
*heard, when we were with him in the holy*  

S 3

mount.

SERM. *mount.* And if we consider further the fulfilment of prophecy, the miracles that our Saviour wrought, his resurrection from the dead, the effusion of the Holy Spirit, the miracles of his followers, and the reasonableness and goodness of the christian doctrine itself, the truth and certainty of it must evidently appear.

2. We may hence infer the excellency of the christian doctrine. One would certainly conclude, that the more excellent the person is, the more excellent would be the dispensation of which he is the author; and as the Son of God is the most excellent person that ever appeared in the world, so the christian religion, established by him, is certainly most excellent. Thus the author to the *Hebrews* goes about to argue the excellency of our oeconomy, from the excellency of Christ's person, chap. i. 1, 2, &c. *God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath, in the last days, spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, &c.*

3. We may hence also conclude, the sufficiency of the christian dispensation. Certainly the Son of God would not come into the world to give us an imperfect revelation of the will of God, I mean such a revelation, as would not answer the ends for which it

was

was designed ; far be it from us to think so SERM.  
of our blessed Saviour ! But he has declared XII.  
to us, all that is necessary in order to our eter-  
nal happiness : There is nothing wanting in  
his precepts, nothing in the matters of belief  
that he has revealed ; there is nothing want-  
ing in his threatenings, nor deficient in his  
promises ; but there is enough in the gospel  
to make us wise unto salvation, for therein  
all the counsel of God is contained.

4. How much then are they to blame,  
who hear others besides Christ ; who fol-  
low the commandments, and traditions,  
and interpretations of men instead of the  
laws of Christ ; who are not contented to  
have Christ alone for their master, but must  
join others with him, as if his doctrine was  
not sufficient : Certainly this is to reflect dis-  
honour upon Christ, as if he was not a suf-  
ficient, or faithful, or intelligible lawgiver,  
but we must be forced to have recourse to  
men for a supplement to his revelation, or  
for the interpretation of his laws. Let chris-  
tians be ashamed of this, and consider how  
much they dishonour the Saviour by this  
practice. But,

5. How much more wicked yet are  
they, who are so bold as to make and de-  
fend innovations in the christian religion ;  
to set up human inventions in the room of  
Christ's laws, and to impose their own in-  
S 4                      terpretations



SERM. interpretations for christian doctrine: This is  
 XII. so far from hearing Christ, that it is down-  
 right rebelling against him ; it is to take his  
 authority out of his hands, and to set them-  
 selves up in his place. Therefore, leaving  
 all such practices, and all such teachers, let  
 us,

6. Bless God for the wonderful reve-  
 lation that his Son has given us : Let us  
 praise him for sending such a teacher and in-  
 structor ; let us give him thanks for the won-  
 derful discovery of his grace in the gospel,  
 and for the means of salvation which he has  
 afforded us. Let us bless his name for the  
 most excellent precepts and instructions that  
 our Saviour has given us ; for the threaten-  
 ings he has denounced to deter us from sin,  
 that we may escape eternal death, and for  
 the promises he has made to encourage us to  
 holiness, that we might obtain life everlast-  
 ing. And,

*Lastly*, Let us all obey this divine com-  
 mand, *viz.* to hear the Son of God. Let  
 us hear him in his precepts, in his promises,  
 and in his threatenings, and in every thing  
 he says unto us. Let us attend to the holy  
 scriptures, wherein the doctrine of Christ is  
 contained, that we may be thoroughly ac-  
 quainted with it. Let us hear Christ with  
 impartiality, let us hear him with diligence,  
 let us hear him only, rejecting all other au-  
 thority in matters of religion.

*Finally*,

Obedience to him commanded. 265

*Finally*, Let us hear the words of Christ, SERM.  
so as to do them, and to obey his command- XII.  
ments; that we may not be so unhappy as  
to deceive ourselves, but being not *forgetful*  
*hearers, but doers of the work, may be blessed*  
*in our deed.*

SER-

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# S E R M O N XIII.

Of being, by GOD, in CHRIST.

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I COR. i. 30.

*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

28  
SERM.  
XIII.

**T**HIS epistle was written to the believers in Christ, at *Corinth*, a famous city of *Achaia*, where a very considerable church was planted by the apostle's ministry: He tarried there for some time, preaching Christ to the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and had converted many to the faith. But in the space of some years absence, as it commonly fell out in many churches, certain persons, or as it rather seems, one certain person, got in amongst them, and caused great disorders in this church of Christ, by endeavouring to draw off their minds from the apostle, and by raising a faction against him, cunningly insinuating some defect in his conduct, carping at his behaviour towards them, and endeavouring to represent him mean and little

little in their eyes, and by this means seeking to advance himself in contempt of the apostle, corrupting their faith and practice, and causing heats, contentions and divisions amongst them. And the better to effect this his selfish and worldly design, he addressed himself, it seems, to them in fine, artful and lofty speeches, making a great shew of wisdom; which took very much with the *Corinthians*, and was very likely to draw them aside, and this made them conceited, and puffed them up with pride for this their leader, and drew them into a contempt of the apostle's plain and honest way of preaching the gospel. This sad effect it already had upon some amongst them, whom this false apostle had actually drawn to his party, and others were in danger of being prevailed upon and seduced by him, which gave occasion to the apostle of writing this epistle to them, wherein he treats them mildly and warily, for fear of offending them, and vindicates himself from those unjust and invidious reflections that were cast on him, by this ill designing person; endeavouring to preserve those, who still adhered to the truth, from being influenced by him, and to reclaim those whom he had led aside, into those great and foul disorders. And in the beginning of this epistle, after he had told them, that he was acquainted with their divisions, had pathetically exhorted them to unity,

SERM.

XIII.



268      Of being, by GOD, in CHRIST.

SERM. unity, and let them know, that he was so  
 XIII. far from setting himself up for a leader or  
 head of a party amongst them, that he  
 thanked God he had baptized but two or  
 three of them, lest any should say he had  
 baptized in his own name: He begins to  
 strike at the root of that, which the false  
 apostle so much boasted of, and whereby he  
 sought to gain applause amongst them, *viz.*  
 that which he calls wisdom of words. He  
 shews how disagreeable the fine and artful  
 strains of eloquence, or the enticing words  
 of man's wisdom were to the plain doctrine  
 of Christ crucified, and in a wonderful man-  
 ner declares, how God set aside all human  
 wisdom and art, in the first publishing of  
 the gospel to the world, and instead of that,  
 made use of a plain and undisguised way of  
 preaching, and the power of miracles to re-  
 commend it; that so the christian faith  
 might not stand in the wisdom of men, but  
 in the power of God. And to cut of all  
 glorying in men, and to induce them to  
 glory in the Lord only, he tells them, in the  
 words of our text, *Of him, i. e. of God, are*  
*ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto*  
*us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification*  
*and redemption.* In treating of which words,  
 I shall endeavour,

I. To shew what is meant by being in  
 Christ Jesus.

II. How

II. How it is of God, that persons are in Christ Jesus. SERM. XIII.

III. To explain the blessings of the gospel here enumerated, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*

I. What are we to understand by being in Christ Jesus? Now,

Persons are said to be in Christ Jesus, when they believe in him, and acknowledge the doctrine of the gospel. This seems to be the meaning of this phrase, in the several places of scripture where it is used. Whatever further sense may be commonly put upon it, persons are said to be in Christ, as they are professed christians, without a direct regard to any other character, whereby some christians are distinguished from others. Some that are in Christ, live disagreeable to character, or to the gospel, which they profess, and will come under the condemnation of it, as is implied, *Rom. viii. 1.* where the apostle tells us, *There is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.* Whatever denominates a man a christian, upon the account of that, he is said to be in Christ; and as believing in Christ, and professing the gospel, denominate a man a christian; so he is said to be in Christ on these accounts, though something more be necessary to the character of a sincere or good christian, *viz.* a christian

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SERM. christian life and conversation. So then be-

XIII. ing in Christ, according to the scripture man-

ner of expression, signifies being christians, believing and professing the gospel. Thus the apostle speaks of *Andronicus* and *Junius*, that they were in Christ before him, *Rom. i. 6, 7. i. e.* they were believers, and professed christians before him, and so we read of the churches of *Judea* which were in Christ, *i. e.* were christian churches; and the apostle says, he *knew a man in Christ, i. e.* a man who was a christian, *caught up into the third heaven*. A man that only believes, and makes no profession of the gospel, as many of the *Jews* did, can hardly be said to be in Christ, as he cannot properly be called a christian; both are necessary to the character of being in Christ, and for obtaining the salvation offered in the gospel, according to *Rom. x. 9. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* Thus therefore, when the apostle says, *Of him are ye in Christ Jesus*, it is as if he had said, it is of God, that ye are christians, or brought over to the faith of Christ.

II. I am next to shew, how it is of God, that persons are in Christ Jesus; particularly, how it was of God, that these *Corinthians*, and the rest of the first christians, were in him. And here we may do well to take

notice, that this is not at all said, to exclude SERM.  
 man's free choice, but does altogether sup- XIII.  
 pose it; and indeed, though many who had   
 it offered to them, freely embraced it; yet  
 others, who had it offered to them, with  
 equal advantages from God, did as willfully  
 reject it. When therefore it is said to be of

God, that persons are in Christ Jesus, thus  
 much is to be understood by it, *viz.* that  
 their being in Christ, is wholly of God's ap-  
 pointment; and that he proposed the chris-  
 tian religion to them with such marks and  
 characters, as entirely recommended it to their  
 choice, and rendered it altogether fit for a ra-  
 tional mind to embrace. But more particulaly,

1<sup>st</sup>, The whole christian religion or the  
 gospel is from God. The entire design and  
 contrivance of it, from the beginning to the  
 end, is of him. All the parts of this won-  
 derful dispensation, owe their original to his  
 good pleasure, and their sanction to his  
 divine authority. This religion is altogether  
 of his appointment; not any part of it is  
 of human invention, or derived from hu-  
 man pleasure and authority, but God is the  
 author of it in every respect. He designed,  
 from the beginning, to set up this dispensa-  
 tion, and gave frequent promises of it, from  
 one time to another: And he, at last, *sent*  
*his Son into the world, in the likeness of sinful*  
*flesh*, to transact with men, and to make a  
 clear revelation of his will to them. And all  
 the



SERM. the works, that our blessed Saviour did on  
 XIII. earth, were the works of him that sent him :

~~~~~ All the words that he spake, were the words of his heavenly Father : All the precepts, that he delivered, were his precepts : All the promises he made, were his promises : All the threatenings, which he denounced, were his threatenings : Finally, the terms of salvation, which he proposed, were agreeable to the will of God, and entirely of his appointment : And so the whole christian dispensation is from him only. In the gospel, *Old things are past away, and all things are made new*, and all things are of God, and he is the author of the new creation. And thus the apostles *followed not cunningly devised fables*, when they made known to the world the power, and coming, and doctrine of Jesus Christ, but delivered things that were certain and truly divine. Whatever religion we embrace, if the religion itself be not of God, our embracing it will signify nothing, as being not of God neither ; but the christian religion being of God's appointment, our being of this religion, *i. e.* our being in Christ, must be of God.

2dly, It is of God, that men are in Christ Jesus, in that he designed, and purposed from the beginning, to call them to salvation by faith in Christ. It is plain from the old Testament, that the Messiah was promised to the *Jews* ; and it is certain, that
 it

it was of God, that any of them were in SERM.
 Christ. And as to the *Gentiles*, whom XIII.
 the apostle here chiefly intends, who were
 the greater part of this church at *Corinth*,
 and whose equality with them under the
 gospel, the *Jews* commonly cavilled at; as
 to some of them, I say, it is also certain,
 that God designed, from the beginning of
 the world to call them to the faith of Christ.
 Of this there are some obscure hints in the
 old Testament, which, indeed, made it not
 so plain, but that it was justly esteemed a
 mystery, till the time of the gospel, the re-
 velation whereof to him the apostle so much
 glories in: For it was then so plainly reveal-
 ed, that God had all along a design to call
 the *Gentiles* to be his people, by faith in
 Christ Jesus, that the apostle very frequent-
 ly, in lofty and glorious expressions, extols
 this wonderful grace. Particularly, *2 Tim.*
i. 9. Who hath saved us, and called us with
an holy calling, not according to our works,
but according to his own purpose and grace,
which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the
world began, *πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων*, before the
 times of the ages, or a great many ages since,
 or before the *Jewish* dispensation, as particu-
 larly in the promise to *Abraham*, that in him,
 all the families of the earth should be blessed.
 Thus also, *Eph. i. 4. According as he hath*
chosen us in him, before the foundation of the
world, that we should be holy, and without

T
blame,

SERM. *blame before him in love, i. e.* God determin-

XIII. ed before the foundation of the world, to
 call them to the faith of Christ, to the end,
 that they might be a holy people to himself,
 and might be conformed to the image of his
 Son, in righteousness and true holiness. The
Gentiles were a long time dead in trespasses
 and sins, and had no hope at all of salvation
 by Christ; but when they were thus afar
 off, and none so much as imagined, that
 they were to become God's people under
 the Messias, then had God, all along, a gra-
 cious design and purpose of calling them to
 the faith of Christ. Well therefore, might
 the apostle tell the *Corinthians*, of God, *are*
ye in Christ Jesus.

3dly, For a further illustration of this head,
 it was of God, that they were in Christ Je-
 sus; for in the fulness of time, when his
 purpose and promise was to be performed
 and fulfilled, he sent the gospel amongst
 them, and gave his servants a commission,
 to call them to the faith of Christ. In the
 beginning of christianity, it was necessary,
 that persons, in order to their embracing the
 gospel, should have some sent to them to ac-
 quaint them thoroughly with it; and not
 only so, but also, that they should see it ac-
 companied with sufficient evidence and au-
 thority; in order whereunto, the preachers
 of it, were to be furnished with the power
 of working miracles, for the confirmation
 of

of it: For as the apostle says, *How should they call on him, in whom they have not believed? and how should they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how should they hear without a preacher? and how should they preach except they be sent?* Rom. x. 14, 15. Thus then, accordingly, the apostles were sent into all the world, to preach Christ and his religion, plainly, clearly and intelligibly to mankind, to declare to them the counsel of God: They were sent also with the power of miracles, which were an infallible proof of the doctrine they preached, of their mission coming from God. Our blessed Saviour himself preached the kingdom of God to the *Jews*, and wrought miracles amongst them: And his apostles, by virtue of their divine mission, did the same in all the world. St. Paul was, in an eminent manner, the apostle of the *Gentiles*, being chiefly appointed thereto by God; and thus he preached to these *Corinthians*, and by his miracles amongst them, recommended the christian robe to their reception; as he tells them, 2 *Epist.* xii. 12. *Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you, in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds.* Thus was the preaching of the gospel attended with such marks and characters, as fully proved it to be a divine institution, and made it every way fit for rational beings to receive. And this com-

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SERM. mission to preach the gospel, and power of
 XIII. miracles, which was altogether necessary to recommend it, being of God; it must certainly be of him that persons were in Christ Jesus. It is also of God, that persons, at this day, are in Christ, seeing by his providence, his word is preserved down to us, which is agreeable to the highest reason, and we have very competent proof of the miracles, which were wrought for the confirmation of the gospel. But as for those christians, who never examine the religion they profess, as it is owing to custom only, or some such thing, that they are christians, so their christianity is of but very little account. Thus we see how it was of God, that these *Corinthians* were in Christ; the whole christian religion is of God; it was the divine purpose, that they, with other *Gentiles*, should be called to the faith of Christ; and it was owing to the divine power and operation accompanying the gospel, that they were prevailed on to embrace it.

III. I come now to speak a little to the blessings of the gospel, as they are here related by the apostle, when he says, *who of God is made unto us, i. e. us christians, us believers, us who are in Christ Jesus, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* Of these I shall briefly treat in their order.

1st, The

1st, The first blessing, which the apostle S E R M. mentions, which we have by Christ under XIII.

the gospel, is *wisdom*, i. e. he, by the discoveries, which he has made, and the instructions he has given in the gospel, teaches men the truest and best wisdom: Which will appear, if we consider the excellent knowledge, that the gospel of Christ conveys to us; for the gospel may be considered, as containing a clear revelation of the prophecies concerning the Messias, and his kingdom, a full declaration of the will of God, with respect to what he requires of us, and a discovery of the highest happiness, together with the means, whereby we may come at the enjoyment of it. They who are in Christ, may have the knowledge of those things from the gospel, which if we consider, we shall see, how Christ is indeed made wisdom to such.—I. The prophecies of the old Testament relating to the Messias, were by the gospel, opened and explained. Many prophecies were from time to time delivered concerning the Messias, his coming, and what he was to do on earth, the greatness and blessings of his kingdom, the extent of his government, and the like; which were, indeed, sufficient to make those earnestly expect him, to whom these prophecies were committed, but gave little or no hope to the greater part of mankind, and were delivered in terms so obscure and difficult to be under-

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SERM. stood, as that those who had them, could
 XIII. form but very dark and uncertain notions of
 ~~~~~ what was contained in them, till their completion at the Messiah's coming. Then, indeed, they who thought not of any such thing, could see plainly, that Christ ought to have suffered, and to have risen from the dead on the third day; they who dreamt of temporal and worldly advantages under the Messiah's government, were made sensible that his kingdom was not of this world, but that the administration of it, and the privileges and blessings, that belonged to it, were altogether spiritual: Then, they who before imagined that the benefits of his kingdom should be confined to the nation of the *Jews*, or at least, that they were chiefly to be enjoyed by them, were made to understand, that the *Gentiles* were to have not only a share, but an equal part with the *Jews* therein. Such glorious things were signified in the predictions relating to the Messias, that many prophets, and righteous men, and kings, desired to see and hear them. The things contained in the mysterious prophecies of the old Testament, were so excellent, that the apostle calls them *the wisdom of God*, which under the gospel was manifested to them, and by them to the world, 1 Cor. ii. 7, &c. *We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world, un-*

*to our glory: Which none of the princes of* SERM.  
*this world knew; for had they known it,* XIII.  
*they would not have crucified the Lord of glo-*  
*ry. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen,*  
*nor ear heard, neither have entered into the*  
*heart of man, the things which God hath pre-*  
*pared for them that love him; but God hath*  
*revealed them unto us by his spirit. And the*  
 mystery of the calling of the *Gentiles* to be  
 God's people, through faith in the Messias,  
 which, in other ages, was not made known  
 unto the sons of men, the apostle particu-  
 larly glories in, as being revealed to them,  
 and by them made known to all nations.—  
 2dly, We may also consider the gospel of  
 Christ, as containing a full and clear declara-  
 tion of the will of God, with regard to  
 what he requires of us; and the knowledge of  
 the divine will in this respect, is certainly to  
 be esteemed most excellent. The perfection  
 of our nature consists in our conformity to the  
 divine will, which makes us, as it were, like  
 God; and the more of this will we know,  
 the more certainly we may become like to  
 our Creator; but nothing can give us so ex-  
 act a knowledge of this will of God, as the  
 gospel of Christ, wherein a full discovery of  
 it is made. The *Gentiles* had only the light  
 of nature, which was divers ways very much  
 obscured, to lead them to the knowledge of  
 the divine will; and the revelation of God's  
 will to the *Jews*, was designed to be sub-



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SERM. servient to the introduction of a more clear

XIII. and full revelation of it by the gospel, where-  
 in the whole counsel of God is contained,  
 For therein, whatever it is his will we should  
 believe and practice, is discovered to us.  
 The will of God with regard to our faith,  
 or what we ought to believe, is so clearly  
 expressed in the gospel, that if men would  
 but come to it with an unprejudiced mind,  
 they could not miss of it. And as to our  
 conversation and practice, it is certain, that by  
 the gospel of Christ, we may be thoroughly  
 furnished unto all good works. The gos-  
 pel teaches us to worship God in spirit and  
 in truth; to love our neighbour as ourselves,  
 and by what acts we should discover this love;  
 to govern ourselves, in all respects as we ought,  
 and, finally, to maintain a conversation eve-  
 ry way agreeable to the divine will, *to deny*  
*all ungodliness and worldly lusts.* The gospel  
 teaches us, that the *wisdom which is from*  
*above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and*  
*easy to be entreated.*—3dly, We may consider  
 the gospel under this view also, viz. as con-  
 taining a discovery of the highest happiness,  
 and giving us all proper directions, with re-  
 gard to the means, whereby we may come  
 to the enjoyment of it. He is certainly a  
 wise man, who proposes to himself a good  
 end, and makes use of suitable methods to  
 attain it: This wisdom, in the highest de-  
 gree, the gospel of Christ teaches; whilst it  
 sets

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sets before us no less than eternal life, a blessed immortality, a crown of glory, and an everlasting inheritance; and teaches us to believe in him, and to repent of our sins, and to follow after righteousness, in order to obtain it. Our Saviour has not only declared to us the will of God with respect to our duty, but has made known to us his will with respect to our happiness; and by him faith and a holy conversation is declared to be the way to come at the enjoyment of it; which he has not only described plainly in the gospel, but has given us all proper motives to stir us up to it; has warned us of the danger of temptation, and taught us to use diligence and circumspection in order to escape it. *Finally*, He has admonished us to avoid all sin, which is followed with misery and death, and to follow after holiness, the end whereof will be everlasting life. Thus are we made wise unto salvation thro' faith which is in Christ Jesus, or by the christian religion; and so have I shewn you how *Christ is made to us wisdom*; and he is made so to men in these respects, by his teaching and preaching whilst he was on the earth, by giving his holy spirit to the apostles, to bring all things to their remembrance which he had said unto them, and by sending them forth to preach the gospel to all the world.

2dly, The second blessing mentioned by the apostle which we have by Christ under the gospel, is righteousness; *Christ is made unto*

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SERM. unto us righteousness. Whereby indeed may

XIII. be meant, that we are made righteous by

Christ, or reduced to the practice of righteousness; seeing the gospel contains the most perfect rule of righteousness, requires us sincerely to follow it, and gives us all necessary assistance therein. But I rather take righteousness here to signify that justification which is frequently mentioned in scripture, whereby the divine grace or favour absolves men, who sincerely embrace the gospel, and persevere in the faith of Christ, from the guilt of their transgression, and treats them as if they were perfectly righteous persons. The apostle tells us, *That all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*: As all were sinners, so all had forfeited eternal life, and were liable to everlasting death; and consequently, whatever they afterwards did, yet, being sinners, they must still remain liable to death, and could not, by their own works, procure life eternal for themselves. True indeed, we all die in *Adam*, as the apostle speaks; but besides this, we have all deserved death by our own transgressions; we are all sinners, and if ever we are justified, it must be of the divine grace or favour. And thus it hath pleased God to appoint a righteousness, or method of justification for us in the gospel, *even that which is by faith in Christ*. The *Gentiles*, tho' they were never under the law of *Moses*, yet were all

all under sin ; and tho' the *Jews* had the SERM.  
 law, yet it was plain, that *by the deeds of the* XIII.  
*law no flesh could be justified in the sight of*  
 God ; but now, as the apostle says, *the right-*  
*eousness of God without the law is manifested,*  
*being witnessed by the law and the prophets ;*  
*even the righteousness of God, which is by faith*  
*of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them*  
*that believe ; for there is no difference ; for all*  
*have sinned, and come short of the glory of*  
 God. *Being justified freely by his grace, thro'*  
*the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, Rom.*  
*iii. 21, &c.* In this justification our sins are  
 forgiven, and our transgressions pardoned ;  
 nay, this justification consisteth in the re-  
 mission of our sins ; as, *Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8.*  
 even as *David* also describeth the blessed-  
 ness of the man unto whom God imput-  
 eth righteousness without works, saying,  
*Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,*  
*and whose sins are covered ; blessed is the man*  
*to whom the Lord will not impute sin.* And  
 they who are thus justified, are entitled to  
 eternal life, or a blessed immortality, as if  
 they were perfectly righteous persons, *Tit.*  
*iii. 7. That being justified by his grace, we*  
*should be made heirs, according to the hope of*  
*eternal life.* This justification we obtain by  
 the death of *Christ*, who offered himself a sa-  
 crifice for sin ; *he was made sin, i. e., a sin-*  
*offering for us, that we might be made the*  
*righteousness of God in him.* And all who  
 sincerely



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SERM. sincerely believe in Christ, or embrace the  
XIII. gospel, are thus justified. And thus is Christ  
made to us righteousness.

3dly, Another blessing we receive by the gospel of Christ, is sanctification; *Christ is made unto us sanctification.* This word signifies a setting apart, or separating from common use, and devoting to God: And by this expression may be meant, that by Christ we are set apart to be the people of God. Thus the apostle, speaking of these christians at *Corinth*, says, *To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints*, 1st Epist. i. 2. And thus the apostle *Peter* speaks, 1st Epist. ii. 9. *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.* Before our Saviour's coming, the *Jews* only were blessed with this privilege of being the people of God; but under the gospel the *Gentiles* were to be made equal with them in this privilege, they were to be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise of God in Christ; and thus the apostle tells them, that they *are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*, Eph. ii. 19. And tho' before Christ's coming the foundation of this privilege to the *Jews*, and that which distinguished them from others of God's people, was their voluntary subjection to the law of *Moses*; now, under the gospel, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* become God's people

no otherwise than by faith in Christ; this SERM. only is the ground of this privilege now, and XIII. by this only we are entitled to this high character, *We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* Those among the *Jews*, who believed in Jesus, remained still the people of God, tho' upon another footing; and they, who were unbelieving, were rejected from being his people; and this privilege the *Gentiles* only enjoyed by faith. But, 2dly, Seeing we are set apart to God, with a design that we should lead holy and pious lives, therefore by sanctification is often signified a holy and righteous conversation; and Christ may be said to be *made to us sanctification*, as he leads us to the practice of holiness and righteousness, which he does by his word and by his spirit. And the gospel of Christ leads us to holiness, as therein his pure and holy example is proposed to us, holy precepts and commands are enjoined us, holy exhortations, admonitions and instructions are given us, the threatenings of it deter us from a vicious practice, and all manner of encouragement to a holy conversation are therein set before us; and our Saviour sanctifies us by his spirit, in that he sends it to us, to dispose us to piety, and to assist us in the practice of holiness; to influence and purify our minds, and to excite us to the sincere performance of every duty. Thus is Christ *made to us sanctification.*

4thly,

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SERM. 4<sup>thly</sup>, The last benefit mentioned by the  
 XIII. apostle which we have by Christ under the  
 gospel, is redemption; he is *made to us redemption*. Now, Christ is our Redeemer, in delivering us, 1. From a sinful state. 2. From a state of misery and death, the consequence and desert of sin.—1<sup>st</sup>, Jesus Christ delivers men from a sinful state. This I have already spoke something to under the head of sanctification; and it is what the apostle expresses, *Tit. ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.* Thus the apostle *Peter* speaks of being *redeemed from a vain conversation*, 1<sup>st</sup> Epist. i. 18. Redemption in this sense, *viz.* from a sinful state, is certainly true of all us sincere christians, but is most eminently seen in the deliverance of those who first embraced christianity, especially the *Gentiles*, from their sinful course; for the *Gentiles* were dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world; but Christ delivered them from the present evil world, *viz.* from the wicked customs and corrupt manners of the world, and from all ungodly commerce with it, and so redeemed them from their vain conversation. This also implies deliverance from the power and dominion of satan. They were before led captive by him at his will, but were now recovered out of his snare, and by the faith of Christ had overcome him. 2<sup>dly</sup>,  
 Christ

Christ redeems us from misery and death, SERM.  
 the consequence and desert of sin. This re- XIII.  
 demption is not indeed accomplished in this  
 world, but will be in that which is to come.  
 Sin has subjected us to many calamities and  
 afflictions, and even to death itself; but they  
 who sincerely believe in Christ, and obey the  
 gospel, tho' they die, shall not die for ever,  
 death will not hold them always, but whilst  
 the wicked rise again to be condemned to the  
 second death, they will rise again in glory  
 to a happy immortality; when *death shall be*  
*swallowed up in victory*, and they shall say,  
*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where*  
*is thy victory?* This is what the apostle means,  
 when he says, *We groan within ourselves wait-*  
*ing for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of*  
*our body*, Rom. viii. 23. when the saints  
 shall be perfectly delivered from all the ca-  
 lamities, miseries, afflictions and inconveni-  
 encies of this mortal state, and shall be en-  
 tirely happy in the fruition of the heavenly  
 glory for ever.

Thus have I briefly shewn how Christ was  
 made to those, with other christians, *wis-*  
*dom*, in opposition to the wisdom of the  
 world, which the false apostle made so much  
 of; *righteousness*, in opposition to the righ-  
 teousness which is of the law, which the  
*Jews* vainly sought to be justified by; *sancti-*  
*fication*, in opposition again to the *Jews*, who  
 thought they were to continue the people of  
 God on the old foundation, viz. the obser-  
 vance



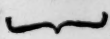
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SERM. vance of *Moses's* law, and that the *Gentiles*  
 XIII. could not be the people of God, without  
 submitting to this law, (for, as it seems, this  
 false apostle was a *Jew*.) And, *lastly, re-*  
*demption*, in delivering them from a state of  
 sin and death ; whereas the redemption or de-  
 liverance of the *Jews* was a temporal and  
 worldly redemption.

Let us now make a few reflections on what  
 has been said, and so conclude.

1. Hereby we may see the excellency of  
 the gospel, or of the christian religion. For  
 these inestimable blessings we have been treat-  
 ing of, are all conveyed to us by the gospel.  
 The gospel of Christ furnishes us with ex-  
 cellent, solid and useful knowledge, with the  
 best discoveries, with the truest wisdom ; is  
 able to make us wise unto salvation ; it brings  
 us to a righteousness of God's appointment,  
 whereby we may be justified ; by it we have  
 the privilege of becoming God's people, and  
 are made partakers of eternal redemption ;  
 and what greater blessings can there be than  
 these ?

2. Let us glory in God only. This is cer-  
 tainly most reasonable, for it is of him that  
 we are in Christ, and it is of him that Christ  
 is made all this to us. Let us not therefore  
 be like some among these *Corinthians*, who  
 were apt to glory in men : This advice the  
 apostle gives, *Cor. iii. 21. Therefore let no*  
*man glory in men ; but let him that glorieth,*  
*glory in the Lord. Cor. i. 31. Let us glory*  
*in*

*in God, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, by* SERM.  
*whom we have now received the attonement; XIII.*  
*and let us give thanks to God, and bleſs and*   
*praiſe his name, for this his wonderful grace.*

3. To conclude, hereby we ſee what kind of life is required of us. Doubtleſs we ought to lead a life agreeable to that diſpenſation by which we receive ſo great bleſſings: And as 'tis plain, from the bleſſings we have been treating of, that nothing but holineſs and righteouſneſs is agreeable to the goſpel, ſo we ought to live a holy and pious life. Let us therefore act agreeable to the wiſdom that our bleſſed Saviour teaches, and do whatſoever God commands. As God is pleaſed to juſtify us by his grace, let us not be ſo ungrateful and wicked as to continue in ſin, but let us make it our buſineſs to follow after righteouſneſs. As we are the people of God by faith in Chriſt, let us walk agreeable to this character; let us be *holy in all manner of converſation*. And, *finally*, as we are redeemed by the blood of Chriſt, let us take care that we return not to a ſinful courſe; but let us perſevere in the faith of Chriſt, and maintain a holy life, that ſo we may eſcape the puniſhment of the wicked, and may obtain the ſalvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus, with eternal glory.

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# SERMON XIV.

CHRIST the Light of the World.

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JOHN viii. 12.

*Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: He that followeth me, shall not walk in darknes, but shall have the light of life.*

22  
SERM.  
XIV.

OUR blessed Saviour was now at Jerusalem, it being the feast of tabernacles. We read of his going thither out of Galilee, in the 10th verse of the preceeding chapter; *But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.* But tho' he went up thus privately, it was not long before he discovered himself in carrying on that great work he came into the world about, viz. teaching and instructing mankind; for, ver. 14. it is said, *Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.* This enraged the priests and pharisees, as it always did, they being unwilling to have the people

people brought off from that superstition SERM.  
 which produced so much gain to them, and XIV.  
 so they sent officers to take him; notwithstanding which, in the last day, that great day of the feast, so called because of the great solemnity of it, it being the custom for the Jews then to compass the altar seven times with branches in their hands, and with great pomp, to bring water from the fountain of Siloab into the temple, singing these words of the prophet *Isaiah*, *With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation.* On that day, Jesus taking occasion from this ceremony, stood and cried, saying, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* The Evangelist, in the following verse, ver. 39. informs us, *that he spake thus of the spirit, which they that believed on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost, says he, i. e. the extraordinary effusion of it, was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.* Our Saviour continuing thus to teach till night drew on, retired then to the mount of Olives; *And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down and taught them again; as in the 1st and 2d verses of this 8th chapter.* But the scribes and pharisees, who always studied to interrupt him in this divine work, and to draw him into snares, that they might



SERM. have whereof to accuse him, and render him

XIV. unacceptable to the people, whose salvation  
 he was endeavouring to promote, whilst he  
 was thus intent upon instructing those that  
 came about him, brought to him a woman  
 taken in adultery, and telling him, that *Moses*  
*in the law commanded them that such should*  
*be stoned,* asked him, What he said to it ?  
*This they said,* says the Evangelist, *tempting*  
*him, that they might have to accuse him.* But  
 he behaved himself in such a manner, as that  
 he soon sham'd and got rid of those trouble-  
 some and ill-designing men. And having  
 got over this interruption, he fell again to  
 his work of teaching the people, as we are  
 informed in our text. *Then spake Jesus a-*  
*gain unto them, saying, I am the light of the*  
*world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in*  
*darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

Our Saviour is often spoken of under the  
 character of *light*, especially in this gospel of  
 St. John. Thus, chap. i. 9. *That was the*  
*true light, which lighteth every man that com-*  
*eth into the world; or, which coming into the*  
*world lighteth every man.* *That was the true*  
*light,* i. e. Christ was the light by way of  
 eminence, in the highest and most excellent  
 sense; otherwise, *John the Baptist* is called  
*a burning, and a shining light;* and our Sa-  
 viour tells his disciples, *they are the light of*  
*the world.* But the light which *John the*  
*Baptist* communicated to men by his preach-  
 ing,

ing, was far inferior to that which our Lord's SERM.  
discourses and doctrine imported, and the a- XIV.  
postles received all the light they imparted to  
the world from Christ himself: So that he  
was the *true light*, as being so in an eminent  
and exalted sense. And thus our Saviour  
speaks of himself, *chap. ix. 5. As long as I*  
*am in the world, I am the light of the world.*  
And, *chap. xii. 46. very agreeable to the*  
words of our text, *I am come a light into the*  
*world, that whosoever believeth on me, should*  
*not abide in darkness.* And truly it is with  
the highest reason he assumes this character  
to himself, if we consider his most excellent  
doctrine, and perfect example, whereby men  
have their understandings enlightened, have  
every thing that is necessary for them to  
know, set in its true light, and are directed  
how to act, in order to the obtaining the  
most valuable end, which his gospel also sets  
before them.

Let us therefore, according to the words  
of our text,

- I. Consider more particularly in what re-  
spects Christ is the light of the world:  
*I am the light of the world.*
- II. The benefit and advantage accruing to  
his sincere followers thereby: *He that*  
*followeth me shall not walk in darkness,*  
*but shall have the light of life.*

294 CHRIST the Light of the World.

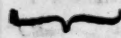
SERM. I. In what respects is Christ the light of  
XIV. the world? God sent him into the world for  
that purpose, and how did he answer the  
design of his mission?

1<sup>st</sup>, Jesus Christ is truly the light of the world, in that he hath plainly discovered and declared to men how they, being sinners, and under the displeasure of God, may be delivered out of that unhappy state, and restored to the divine favour and acceptance. This is a thing of the utmost importance for us to know, as the sense of the divine displeasure carries in it the greatest misery, and the favour, acceptance, and approbation of our Maker supposes the highest happiness. *In his favour is life, and his loving-kindness is better than life*; and without his favour we can never be happy, but must be in a most dreadful and miserable condition. Therefore nothing is more necessary, nothing can be more grateful and pleasing to us, if we have a right judgment and apprehension of things, than to know, and be thoroughly assured how we may regain the divine favour and acceptance, which we have forfeited by our sins. If men indeed had never sinned, they would never have reason to doubt of the divine favour, but might be certain, so long as they did nothing but what was well-pleasing to God, that he would continue favourable and propitious to them; but as they *have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God*, the  
way

way of being restored to his favour is not of SERM.  
itself so plain and certain, as to admit of no XIV.  
doubt or question. It is certain that, in such  
a case, the light of nature would suggest  
the most probable way of being restored to  
the divine acceptance would be by repentance and a sincere reformation : But that the  
light of nature was not altogether satisfactory  
upon this point, may possibly be concluded  
from the various sacrifices and ceremonies among the heathen, whereby they endeavoured to appease their offended deities. Besides,  
a person may have some reason to say with himself, How do I know whether it be consistent with the honour of God, which, as lawgiver and governor of the world he is concerned to preserve, with the ends of his most wise government, and the good of the various orders of beings under him, to pardon my wilful and repeated breach of his laws, tho' upon the most sincere repentance ? I am indeed persuaded, that his nature is kind and good ; but how can I be perfectly assured, without all doubt or scruple, that it is consistent with his other perfections, particularly the relation he stands in to his creatures, as lawgiver and governour, to accept of my repentance ? And if it be not consistent with all his perfections, it is consistent with none, forasmuch as they all perfectly harmonize. Now Jesus Christ, in the gospel, has sufficiently delivered us from all doubts of this  
U 4 nature ;



SERM. nature ; for therein we are plainly taught,

XIV.  that repentance is the sure way of being restored to the divine favour, and having our sins forgiven, are hereupon called, encouraged and excited to repentance, and informed wherein it truly consists, and are fully assured that God will accept of it, not absolutely, but upon the account of the death and sacrifice of his own dear Son, who died for our sins, and gave his life a ransom for us ; so that, as none can be pardoned and saved without repentance, so neither are we pardoned and saved wholly upon the account of it, but with regard had to Jesus Christ, who is *the propitiation for our sins* : And accordingly it was ordered in the divine wisdom, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached *in his name* among all nations. And this method of forgiveness, and being restored to the divine favour and acceptance, which is declared in the gospel of Christ, does most effectually exclude all doubts and scruples about the certainty of such forgiveness and acceptance ; since hereby the honour of God, as governour of the world, is as well preserved, and his laws as effectually secured from contempt, and the ends of the divine government as well answered, as if the offenders themselves had suffered the punishment of their own transgressions. Thus then Jesus Christ is truly *the light of the world*, inasmuch as he has discovered and  
declared

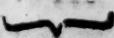
declared to sinful men, in the gospel, the SERM.  
certain way of their being restored to so de- XIV.  
sirable and necessary a blessing as the divine  
favour, acceptance and approbation; and has  
afforded to us therein all suitable means, ad-  
vantages and assistances, in order to our re-  
pentance and reconciliation with God.

2dly, Jesus Christ is *the light of the world*,  
in declaring to us the whole will of God,  
with respect to our duty, delivering to us  
such excellent rules and directions for our  
whole conduct, and shewing us how to be-  
have and act in every respect, in every ca-  
pacity, relation and condition. The light of  
nature might, indeed, have instructed men  
in the several parts of their duty, and God  
gave them their reason for that purpose; and  
yet it must be acknowledged, that our rea-  
son is very liable to be perverted, and the  
light of nature very much obscured, through  
passion or prejudice, through a course of vice,  
the prevalency of bad custom, or the strength  
of evil habits. And this was truly the case  
of almost all mankind, before the glorious  
gospel of Christ appeared amongst them. And  
as to any particular revelations that God be-  
fore made to any part of mankind, they were  
very imperfect and deficient in this respect,  
and came vastly short of that real piety, true  
righteousness and universal goodness, that  
is recommended, in the preaching of our Sa-  
viour and his apostles. In the gospel, we  
are

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SERM. are perfectly taught how we ought to walk  
 XIV. and to please God ; by this most excellent  
 revelation we are thoroughly furnished unto  
 all good works. Jesus Christ has declared  
 to us every thing, that becomes us as rational  
 creatures, all the duties we owe to  
 God, ourselves, and our neighbours, has  
*taught us to live soberly, righteously and god-  
 ly in the world ;* to be good and kind, and  
 merciful, and charitable ; has set all the parts  
 of virtue, all the duties of morality in their  
 proper light, and recommended them with  
 the utmost advantage. By his gospel we  
 may plainly see every thing that ought to be  
 avoided by us, what is displeasing to God,  
 and unbecoming our rational make ; and  
 therein, every thing that is agreeable to the  
 divine will, to the dictates of right reason,  
 and to the several relations we stand in, is  
 plainly and clearly expressed, and after the  
 most suitable manner enforced and recom-  
 mended. And our Saviour is the light of  
 the world in this respect, not only by his  
 heavenly and divine doctrine, but by his pure  
 and spotless example, which was perfectly  
 free from all vice and disorder, and in which  
 the highest piety, the greatest goodness, and  
 all the parts of the most consummate virtue,  
 did most plainly and conspicuously appear.

3dly, Jesus Christ is *the light of the world*,  
 inasmuch as he has revealed to them the  
 glorious reward of eternal life, to be bestow-  
 ed

ed on all those who sincerely love and obey SERM.  
 God. A future state, in general, may very XIV.  
 probably be concluded from reason, though   
 not certainly known; but the nature, man-  
 ner and duration of this state, were much  
 more uncertain. Hence though the heathen  
 had some notion of such a state, yet they  
 were generally very wild in their conceits  
 about it, and had very gross apprehensions  
 concerning it. And the notices of a life to  
 come, in the old Testament, are very rare  
 and obscure. But the revelation of Jesus  
 Christ is full of the promises and assurances  
 of it, plainly declares, that it will be ever-  
 lasting, and, in great measure, informs us of  
 the nature and manner of it, and the means  
 of bringing it about, namely, by a resur-  
 rection, which is one of the principal arti-  
 cles of the doctrine of Christ, and very much  
 insisted on through the whole gospel. Thus  
 our Lord Jesus Christ has *brought life and*  
*immortality to light through the gospel*, 2 Tim.  
 i. 10. And to encourage us to repent, and  
 persist in a holy and righteous conversation,  
 he has given to us the exceeding great and  
 precious promises of eternal glory and never-  
 ending felicity. He has told us, *That the*  
*righteous shall enter into life eternal, shall come*  
*forth out of their graves, unto the resurrection*  
*of life, shall shine as the sun in the kingdom*  
*of their father*, and shall possess the glories  
 and joys, and delights of heaven for ever.  
 His



300 CHRIST the Light of the World.

SERM. His gospel informs us, of *an inheritance that*

XIV. *is incorruptible and undefiled, and fadeth not away,* which is reserved in heaven for his sincere followers, and that they *who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality,* shall receive the reward of everlasting life, and obtain eternal glory, honour and peace. In this blissful state, the holy scriptures acquaint us, we shall enjoy the continued favour and glorious presence of the Almighty; shall be with Christ, where he is, and shall behold his glory; shall see him as he is, and be like unto him, in happiness, in immortality, and in glory, having our vile bodies changed and made like unto his glorious body. And this glorious and everlasting state is not only promised and expressly declared in the gospel by Christ and his apostles, but he has given us the utmost assurance of it in his own most glorious resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven; blessed therefore, for ever *blessed, be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.* Thus have we seen how and in what respects Christ is the light of the world. And come now,

II. To

II. To consider the great benefit and advantage accruing to his sincere followers thereby. The things wherein Christ is a light to the world, as they have been considered by us, are certainly most useful and advantageous; they therefore, who sincerely follow him, must find the benefit and advantage of them. The advantage that they receive from Christ's being the light of the world, is expressed in these words; *He that followeth me, shall not walk in darknes, but shall have the light of life.* To follow Christ here, must certainly signify more than a bare local following of him; for many who so followed him, did it more out of regard to their bellies, than to any thing else, because they eat of the loaves and were filled, as we read, *John vi. 26.* But he who follows Christ here, is such an one as has a sincere regard to what Christ, who is the light of the world, teaches; who believes in him and obeys his doctrine, is one of his sheep, one of his sincere disciples. Now such an one as this, *shall not walk in darknes, but shall have the light of life.* Darknes, as it is used metaphorically, has several significations in scripture. It sometimes signifies great affliction, distress and perplexity, as light is used for comfort and a prosperous state of affairs, *Isai. l. 10.* *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darknes and hath no light? let him trust*

302 CHRIST the Light of the World.

SERM. *in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his*

XIV. God. And, Lam. iii. 1, 2. *I am the man that*

*hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath:*

*He hath led me and brought me into darkness,  
but not into light.* Now though those who

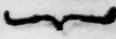
follow Christ, are not exempted from outward afflictions and calamities, yet upon the divine and heavenly precepts of the gospel, they may very well surmount all anxiety, trouble and perplexity of mind, and may enjoy comfort, peace and satisfaction in the midst of their worldly troubles, *Joh. xvi. 33.*

*These things have I spoken unto you, says our blessed Saviour to his disciples, that in me ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* Darkness is also frequently

used for a state of ignorance; and certainly they who follow Christ as they ought, who come to the light which shines in his word, and attend to so heavenly and divine an instructor, cannot be ignorant of any thing that is either necessary or proper for them to know.

Though they were sometimes darkness, they are now light in the Lord. They cannot be ignorant of their duty, nor of the terms of the divine acceptance, nor of the rewards of the future life, which are necessary to carry them on in the way of righteousness and obedience. But, in the last place, darkness is very often used for sin and vice, practised in a state of ignorance, and walking in darkness,

# CHRIST the Light of the World. 303

darkness, most commonly signifies following SERM.  
and living in such sinful and vicious practi- XIV.  
ces. Thus, 1 *John* i. 6. *If we say that we*   
*have fellowship with him, and walk in dark-*  
*ness, we lie, and do not the truth.* It follows,  
*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the*  
*light, we have fellowship one with another,*  
*and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth*  
*us from all sin.* So in *Prov.* ii. 13, 14, 15.  
*Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in*  
*the ways of darkness; who rejoice to do evil,*  
*and delight in the frowardness of the wicked;*  
*whose ways are crooked, and they froward in*  
*their paths.* Accordingly, when our Saviour  
says, *he that followeth me, shall not walk in*  
*darkness,* his meaning seems to be, he that  
has a due regard to my doctrine, shall not  
live in the practice of vice, shall not fol-  
low sinful and unlawful courses. Christ's  
doctrine is quite contrary to such things;  
consequently, they who adhere to it, will e-  
scape them, and whilst they continue to ad-  
here to it, will not be overcome by them.  
Our Saviour adds, *but shall have the light of*  
*life; he that followeth me shall not walk in*  
*darkness, but shall have the light of life.* A-  
greeable to this phrase, St. *John* says, chap. i.  
4. *In him was life, and the life was the light*  
*of men;* whereby they had the knowledge  
of this life eternal, and were directed in the  
way that leads to it. Now they who fol-  
low Christ, *shall have the light of life, i. e.*  
*1st,* While they faithfully adhere to, and  
obey



304 CHRIST the Light of the World.

SERM. obey his doctrine, they shall safely go on

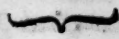
XIV. in the way that leads to life; and, 2dly,

They who follow Christ *shall have the light of life, i. e.* have the comfortable and delightful hopes and prospect of this blessed and glorious life. They shall be able to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and may know that when their *earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, they have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*; and that *when Christ, who is their life shall appear, they shall then also appear with him in glory*. They who obey Christ may be certain, that they shall be glorified with him; and being like him in holiness here, that they shall be like him in an immortal life, in never-ending glory and felicity in the world to come, when they shall see him as he is, and behold his glory. Thus Christ being the light of the world, they that follow him, who obey his doctrine, and conform to his example, *shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*.

Let us now conclude with a reflection or two on what has been said.

1. Hereby we see the excellency of the gospel, or of the christian dispensation, which has so excellent a teacher and instructor for its author, and is attended with so good and happy effects. Light we know, is one of the chief blessings and comforts of life; but the light of the mind is far more valuable and

# CHRIST the Light of the World. 305

and excellent than that of the body, as the SERM. mind is more excellent than the body : But XIV. this spiritual light, this light of the mind, is  imparted to us through the gospel, is communicated to us from Christ, the light of the world, from his heavenly doctrine and divine example. As light is most pleasant, so darkness is a most uncomfortable and melancholy thing ; but bodily darkness is nothing to the darkness of the mind, the darkness of ignorance and vice ; and from this most unhappy state are we delivered by the glorious gospel of Christ. There is such an excellent light diffused through the whole of it, that they who heartily embrace it, and give themselves up to the direction of it, and so are the disciples and followers of Christ, *shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* Jesus Christ in the gospel, has called us to repentance, has laid down the most excellent rules and directions for a holy, righteous and pious life, and given us the highest encouragements thereunto : And thus he has shewn us, how we, who are sinful creatures, may, through him, be restored to the favour of God, and how we may continue in his favour ; and has most fully declared, that God's favour, to the righteous, is not confined to this world, but will be enjoyed by them in an ever-

X

lasting

# 306 CHRIST the Light of the World.

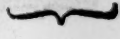
SERM. lasting state, which will make them ever-

XIV. lastingly happy. How excellent then, how  
 glorious a dispensation must that of the  
 gospel be, which reveals and discovers such  
 excellent things to us? Let us, therefore,  
 bless God, who in granting us the gos-  
 pel, has blessed us with all spiritual bles-  
 sings, who has called us out of darkness  
 into this his marvellous light; who has  
 vouchsafed to speak to us by his Son, and  
 by him to make known to us the riches  
 of his grace, his good and acceptable, and  
 perfect will, and whatever is necessary to  
 bring us to the enjoyment of eternal life,  
 glory, and felicity.

2. Having this glorious light of the gos-  
 pel by Jesus Christ, *Let us walk as chil-  
 dren of light.* The greater the light is  
 which we enjoy, the greater will our con-  
 demnation be, if we act not agreeable to  
 it. If, whilst the light of the gospel shines  
 upon us, we continue to walk in the ways  
 of darkness, and being captivated by vi-  
 cious habits, *love darkness rather than light,*  
 and do not turn from it, by a hearty re-  
 pentance, our case will be much worse than  
 if we had never enjoyed the gospel. *This*  
*is the condemnation,* says our blessed Sa-  
 viour, *that light is come into the world, and*  
*men loved darkness rather than light, because*  
*their deeds were evil. For every one that*

CHRIST the Light of the World. 307

*doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to* SERM.  
*the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.* XIV.

*But he that doth the truth, cometh to the light,*   
*that his deeds may be made manifest, that*  
*they are wrought in God, according to his*  
*mind and will, John iii. 19, 20, 21. Let*  
*us therefore, above all, endeavour to purge*  
*our hearts from the love of vice; this we*  
*must of necessity do, if we would receive*  
*any advantage from the glorious revelation*  
*of the gospel. And this being done, let*  
*us always have recourse to this light, that*  
*we may direct all our actions by it. Let*  
*us not be conformed to this world, but be*  
*transformed by the renewing of our mind,*  
*that we may prove what is that good and*  
*perfect, and acceptable will of God; and,*  
*being satisfied what this will is, let us*  
*heartily comply with it, casting off all*  
*the works of darkness, and putting on*  
*the armour of light. Let us follow Christ*  
*as his sheep, and faithfully adhere to his*  
*holy gospel, and then we shall not walk*  
*in the ways of darkness, but obeying his*  
*doctrine, and walking as he walked, shall*  
*have the light of life, the glorious prospect of*  
*life eternal, and of happiness that will never*  
*end; and, finally, shall, at last, be secured*  
*from that state of everlasting darkness, death,*  
*and perdition, which shall be the portion*  
*of all impenitent sinners, and shall be eter-*  

X 2nally



308 CHRIST the Light of the World.

SERM. nally happy in a kingdom of perfect light  
XIV. and glory.

Christian holiness is the sure way to happiness, and the promise of eternal life and glory is annexed to sincere piety and righteousness; and Christ's doctrine teaching and recommending this holiness, piety and righteousness, they who obey it, and adhere to it, *i. e.* who follow him, do certainly *walk in the way that leadeth to life.*

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# SERMON XV.

Salvation wrought by the Grace of  
G O D.

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TITUS, ii. 11, 12.

*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation,  
hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that  
denying ungodliness and wordly lusts; we  
should live soberly, righteously, and godly in  
this present world.*

**T**HE main design of the gospel, or SERM.  
XV.  
christian dispensation, is to promote  
holiness and righteousness, to recommend  
and enforce true practical religion, and to re-  
duce men to obedience to God, and the ex-  
ercise of their duty in every respect. Hence,  
as the gospel reveals the most wonderful and  
stupendous grace and goodness of the divine  
Being towards us, his unworthy creatures; so,  
at the same time, it calls us to the serious con-  
sideration and sincere practice of our duty, ac-  
cording to every condition and circumstance,

SERM. and the several relations we stand in; and con-

XV. tains all the rules of a holy life and conversa-

tion. All the most excellent benefits of it are offered to us, and are to be enjoyed by us, only as we believe, and repent, and turn to God, and sincerely comply with his will. The grace and mercy of God, displayed in this wonderful dispensation, is proposed to us with a view to encourage us to a holy life; and is made use of, in the gospel, as a most powerful and forceable argument and motive to such a conversation. This is the Tenure of the whole new Testament, and it is with this view that the words of our text in particular are introduced; as may be seen if we consider the foregoing verses. In the first chapter the apostle had given *Titus* an account of the evil conversation, and corrupt doctrine of some false teachers, who exceedingly troubled the churches of the *Cretans*, among whom he was left by the apostle, that he might set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city: And in the following chapter he directs *Titus* how to teach and act, in opposition to these false teachers. In the first verse he gives him a general exhortation, *But speak you the things which become sound doctrine*; and in the following verses he explains it, by applying it to the several ages and conditions of men, and shews what he means by *the things which become sound doctrine*: That the  
aged

*aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in* SERM.  
*faith, or in the faithful discharge of their du-* XV.  
*ty, in charity, in patience. The aged women*  
*likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh*  
*holiness, not false accusers, not given to much*  
*wine, teachers of good things; that they may*  
*teach the young women to be sober, to love their*  
*husbands, to love their children, to be discreet,*  
*chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their*  
*own husbands, that the word of God be not*  
*blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be*  
*sober-minded. In all things shewing thyself a*  
*pattern of good works; in doctrine shewing*  
*uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech,*  
*or good wholesome discourses, tending to pro-*  
 *mote true piety and virtue, that cannot be*  
*condemned; that he that is of the contrary spi-*  
*rit may be ashamed, having no evil thing to*  
*say of you. Then he returns, Exhort ser-*  
*vants to be obedient to their own masters, and*  
*to please them well in all things; not answer-*  
*ing again, not purloining, but shewing all good*  
*fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of*  
*God our Saviour in all things: Which last*  
*words, that they may adorn, &c. or among*  
*all men, tho' they refer more immediately*  
*to the servants spoken of just before, yet they*  
*may be understood to refer to all those whose*  
*duties the apostle had likewise reckoned up.*  
*And then, as a most forcible argument, for*  
*the sincere practice of these and all other du-*  
*ties, he adds, in the words of the text, For*



SERM. *the grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath*

XV. *appeared to all men, teaching us, us christians, or believers in Christ, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*

In treating on which words, I shall consider,

I. What we are to understand by this *grace of God.*

II. The character that is here given of it, *it bringeth salvation.*

III. Its appearance.

IV. How it *appeared to all men.*

V. What it teaches.

VI. How this appearance of the grace of God is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life.

VII. The happy consequence of our leading such a life, according to the gospel; we may then *look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

I. What are we to understand in this place by the grace of God? The grace of God signifies his favour, love and mercy, his kind affection and good-will; and by it here, we are to understand, either that grace and favour of God which is discovered in the gospel, or, which comes to the same thing, the gospel itself which reveals it.

1. If

1. If we are to take the grace of God here SERM.  
 in a proper sense, we are to understand by it XV.  
 that grace and favour in particular which he  
 has displayed in the gospel, his grace in Christ  
 Jesus, that kind affection and good-will in  
 the divine Being towards men which the gos-  
 pel reveals. The favour of God is indeed  
 shewn to us, and to all his creatures in sever-  
 al respects; his kindness and good-will to-  
 wards us, is clearly seen in the good things  
 of this life, which by his bounty we partake  
 of, and in all the blessings of his providence:  
 But his love, and mercy, and kindness, which  
 is displayed to us in the gospel thro' Christ  
 Jesus, surpasses all the rest, is the greatest  
 and most wonderful; and therefore may be,  
 as it often is, by way of eminence called, *the*  
*grace of God*, or the *favour of God*. But,

2. The grace of God in this place may,  
 by a very easy *metonymy*, signify the gos-  
 pel, in which this wonderful grace and fa-  
 vour is revealed; that gracious dispensation  
 which Christ, by the appointment of his Fa-  
 ther, is the author of. And in this sense  
 we may understand it, not only of that part  
 of the gospel which precisely reveals the grace  
 and favour of God, but of the whole com-  
 plex and constitution of the gospel, as, to-  
 gether with the revelation of this grace, the  
 manner of its conveyance, and the conditions  
 to be performed on our part, in order to re-  
 ceive benefit by it, and the like. All this  
 together

SERM. together may very well be called *the grace of*  
 XV. *God*; for this whole dispensation is founded in  
 his grace, has its rise from it, and is the effect  
 of it. It is purely of the divine grace that, upon  
 our believing, and repenting, we may par-  
 take of the blessings of the gospel, and may  
 have a share in the benefits of the divine fa-  
 vour. Thus then, by *the grace of God* in  
 this place, I rather think we are to under-  
 stand the whole dispensation of the gospel,  
 which is the effect of the greatest grace and  
 favour. Thus the gospel is called in other  
 places, particularly, 2 Cor. vi. 1. *We then as*  
*workers together with him, beseech you also,*  
*that ye receive not the grace of God in vain;*  
 i. e. that ye receive not the gospel in vain;  
 which they do who persist not in the belief  
 and profession of it, or do not conform to  
 what it requires. So, Heb. xii. 15. *Looking*  
*diligently, lest any man fail of, or fall from,*  
*the grace of God,* i. e. from the gospel. Thus  
 also it is called *the word of his grace*; as, Acts  
 xx. 32. *And now, brethren, I commend you*  
*to God, and to the word of his grace.* It is  
 sometimes called *grace* absolutely; as, John  
 i. 17. *For the law was given by Moses, but*  
*grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,* i. e. the  
 gospel, as appears by its being put in con-  
 tradistinction to the law, and by the word  
*truth*, the gospel being also frequently called  
*the truth*. It is also called *the grace of Christ*;  
 as, Gal. i. 6. *I marvel that you are so soon re-*  
*moved*

*moved from him that called you to the grace of* SERM.  
*Christ, unto another gospel.* So then, by the XV.  
*grace of God* in our text, we are to under-  
 stand the gospel, or the covenant of grace in  
 Christ, which is called *the grace of God*, upon  
 the account of his wonderful favour therein  
 displayed.

II. We are next to consider the character  
 that is here given of this grace of God, or  
 the gospel, *it bringeth salvation; the grace of*  
*God that bringeth salvation,* ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ  
 σωτηρία, the salutary, or salutiferous grace of  
 God. The grace and favour of God reveal-  
 ed in the gospel very well deserves this title,  
 forasmuch as that grace tends to our salva-  
 tion, and is shewn in saving us. And the  
 gospel itself may well be called salutiferous,  
 forasmuch as it reveals and offers to us, and  
 brings with it, to them that embrace it, even  
 the greatest deliverance and salvation. Thus  
 the gospel is called *the word of salvation*, Acts  
 xiii. 26. *To you is the word of this salvation*  
*sent; the gospel of salvation*, Eph. i. 13. *After*  
*that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of*  
*your salvation;* and is said to be *the power of*  
*God unto salvation*, Rom. i. 16. —It is also  
 sometimes called *salvation*; thus, by this  
 word we are to understand the gospel, Acts  
 xxviii. 28. *Be it known therefore unto you,*  
*that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gen-*  
*tiles, and that they will hear it.* And, Heb.  
 ii. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so*  
*great*



SERM. *great salvation, which at the first began to be*

XV. *spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us*  
 by them that hear him? i. e. if we neglect the

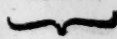
gospel which brings so great salvation. Now the salvation which the gospel brings will appear to be most excellent and great, if we consider that it consists in a deliverance from a sinful state, and from a state of misery and death, the consequence and desert of sin, and in our being raised to eternal life, and a state of everlasting felicity in heaven.

1. The gospel delivers men from a sinful state, from the power and dominion of sin; it turns them from a sinful course, from the practice of impiety and unrighteousness, and reduces them to a holy and righteous conversation, and gives them the privilege of becoming the people of God. From the time that sin entered into the world, by the disobedience of our first parents, it continually increased and got ground, and at length so prevailed, that the generality of mankind had forsaken the true God, and given themselves up to idolatry, and all manner of vicious and abominable practices; they had abandoned truth, and righteousness, and goodness, and by fulfilling their unlawful desires, and following their depraved inclinations, were sunk far below the dignity of their nature, and had contracted habits very unbecoming beings of such a make and constitution. But the design of the gospel was to reform sinful men,

men, to deliver them from the power and SERM.  
prevalency of vice and idolatry, and to make XV.  
them the sincere worshippers and servants of

God. *The Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil; that he might reclaim men from a course of vice, and a life of impiety, to the obedience they owe to God, and the practice of piety and holiness; he came to teach us our duty, and to enforce it by all suitable motives, to lead men to repentance, and to turn from their iniquities, from idolatry and superstition, to the worship of God, and from sin to the practice of righteousness. And as it was the design of the gospel thus to save men, by turning them from their sins, so this was the happy effect of it amongst those who sincerely embraced it, and put themselves under its purifying influence; for such persons, of idolaters, became worshippers of the true God, of wicked and unholy, became holy and righteous: The Gentiles who believed, tho' they were sometime darkness, were now light in the Lord; were turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of satan unto God; were delivered from the power of darkness, from their idolatrous state, and were translated into the kingdom of Christ; and they who were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, and lived in all manner of abominable practices, when the gospel came to them, and they put themselves*

SERM. selves under it, by a hearty reception of it,  
 XV. became, as it were, new creatures, casting off  
 those works of darkness, and returning from  
 the practice of sin to a holy and righteous  
 conversation. The deliverance of the *Gentiles*, from their heathen state of idolatry and  
 apostacy from God, and their being brought  
 back into his kingdom, under the gospel,  
 which is called *their salvation*, is expressed  
 in a very sublime and lofty manner by the a-  
 postle, in his epistle to the *Ephesians*, chap.  
 i. 19, 20. *And (that ye may know) what is*  
*the exceeding greatness of his power to us-*  
*ward who believe, according to the working of*  
*his mighty power, which he worked in Christ,*  
*when he raised him from the dead, and set him*  
*at his own right-hand in the heavenly places.*  
 He goes on in the 2d chap. *And you hath he*  
*quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins;*  
*wherein in time past ye walked according to the*  
*converse of this world, according to the prince*  
*of the power of the air, the spirit that now*  
*worketh in the children of disobedience; among*  
*whom also we all had our conversation in times*  
*past, or lived in the lusts of our flesh, fulfill-*  
*ing the desires of the flesh, and of the mind;*  
*and were by nature the children of wrath,*  
*even as others, i e. as other Gentiles: But*  
*God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love*  
*wherewith he loved us, even when we were*  
*dead in sins, hath quickened us together with*  
*Christ, (by grace ye are saved) and hath*  
*raised*

*raised us up together, and made us sit together* SERM.  
*in heavenly places, or in the kingdom of God,* XV.  
*in, or thro', Christ Jesus.* Thus the *Gentiles* 

were at first saved by the gospel, were delivered from their sinful state, and made alive unto God; and those of the *Jews*, who believed, were thus saved, being turned from their iniquities: And even now, all who sincerely embrace the gospel, are enabled to escape the pollutions of the world, and to live holy, righteous, and pious lives. Thus then, the gospel brings salvation from sin, or deliverance from its power and dominion; it turns men from sin unto God. But,

2. The salvation which the gospel brings, consists in the remission of sins, and deliverance from misery and death. As those who embrace the gospel are delivered from a sinful state, so they have all their sins forgiven, their transgressions pardoned, and their manifold offences against God remitted and pass'd by. Nothing is more plainly revealed, or more expressly promised in the gospel, than the forgiveness of sins to all that repent and believe in Christ; and this benefit, this unspeakable favour, is declared to be given thro' Christ, for his sake, and on the account of his death, and the shedding of his blood: He is *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; he was delivered for our offences, he gave himself for our sins, and was made sin, or a sin-offering, for us; and it is thro'*



SERM. thro' him that the remission of sins is offered

XV. to us in the gospel. *By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which the Jews could not be justified by the law of Moses: And in him we have redemption thro' his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.* And then, as by the gospel men receive the remission of sins, so of consequence they are freed from the punishment of them, from misery and death, and all the dismal effects of their transgressions. As all men have sinned, so they have deserved death, and made themselves liable to misery and punishment, as the just reward of their crimes and offences against God: But the gospel brings salvation and deliverance from all this evil; Christ gave himself that he might redeem us from all iniquity, i. e. from the punishment of all our iniquities; he redeemed the *Jews* from the curse of the law, and rescued the *Gentiles*, as many of them as believed, from the demerits of their crimes. The gospel brings eternal redemption to all sincere, penitent believers, so that tho' they die the temporal death, they shall not die the second, i. e. the eternal death; they shall not perish, but shall be delivered from everlasting destruction, from the wrath to come, and from all that evil and misery that their sins have justly deserved.

3. The gospel brings salvation in that, by it, we have the promise of eternal life, and a blessed and glorious immortality in the world  
to

to come. As all men have sinned, so they SERM.  
 have come short of the glory of God; but the XV.  
 gospel restores men to this glory. As by the

gospel we receive the remission of our sins, so by it we are made heirs to an eternal inheritance, an everlasting kingdom, a crown of life and of glory, that fadeth not away, which we shall certainly enjoy, if we live as the gospel teaches. As those who sincerely believe and embrace it, and repent of their sins, are restored to the favour of God, and his acceptance and approbation here, so, if they persevere in well-doing, they shall be eternally happy in his presence in the heavenly kingdom. *Christ has brought life and immortality to light thro' the gospel*; and as those who believe in him, so as to obey him, are delivered from a state of misery and death, so they shall live for ever, and shall enjoy eternal happiness. Eternal life is frequently promised in the gospel, and there are many passages in it that denote the perpetual felicity and glory of that everenduring state. As Christ was delivered to death, for our offences, that we might obtain the forgiveness of our sins; so he was raised again for our justification, that we might be assured of a resurrection to everlasting life, and a happy immortality. By the gospel, sincere christians are made the children of God, *and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*, and so shall be glorified with him; and shall re-

Y

ceive

SERM. receive an *inheritance that is incorruptible, and*

XV. *undefiled, and that fadeth not away*; when their

natures shall be raised and perfected, their faculties restored, and their bodies glorified, they shall have every thing that is truly desirable and delightful to enjoy; shall *shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their heavenly Father*, and shall be for ever completely happy in his favour and presence. Thus we see what a salutary, or salutiferous dispensation the gospel is; it delivers men from the power and dominion of sin, saves them from the condemnation and punishment of it, and raises them to a state of eternal felicity.

III. We are now to consider the appearance of this grace of God; *the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared*, ἐπεφάνη, appeared conspicuously and clearly, with lustre, brightness and splendor. Now the grace of God appeared,

1. In the appearance and coming of Jesus Christ. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*, as the effect of his wonderful grace, and to men he sent him into the world; and as the grace of God was clearly seen in the appearance of Christ itself, so, when he came, he, by his preaching, plainly revealed the gospel of salvation: This was the first clear discovery of the grace of God, upon which all the future discoveries of it were founded. The grace of God was displayed in all the circumstances of our

Saviour's appearance, in his coming into the SERM.  
 world in the likeness of sinful flesh, in his XV.  
 dwelling among men, in his preaching, and  
 in his works, in his sufferings, death and re-  
 surrection. The love of God to men was  
 shewn in a very glorious manner, in sending  
 so high and beloved a person, as his only be-  
 gotten Son, into the world in so mean and  
 humble a condition, to converse with such  
 sinful and unworthy creatures: The riches  
 of the divine grace were discovered in our Sa-  
 viour's preaching, which preaching was fully  
 confirmed by his miracles and wonderful  
 works. The kindness and love of God ap-  
 peared towards men, in the highest manner,  
 in the sufferings and death of this most excel-  
 lent person; *God commendeth his love towards*  
*us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ*  
*died for us.* And the truth and certainty of  
 all this is manifest in his resurrection from  
 the dead. Thus we see that the grace of  
 God appeared in or by our Saviour's appear-  
 ance, according to what is said, *2 Tim. i. 9,*  
*10. Who hath saved us and called us with an*  
*holy calling, not according to our works, but*  
*according to his own purpose and grace, which*  
*was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world*  
*began; but is now made manifest by the ap-*  
*pearance of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who*  
*hath abolished death, and hath brought life and*  
*immortality to light through the gospel.* And,  
*1 John iv. 9. the apostle says, In this was*  
 Y 2 *manifested*



SERM. *manifested the love of God towards us, because*

XV. *God sent his only begotten Son into the world,*  
 { *that we might live through him.*

2dly, The grace of God, or the gospel, appeared by the preaching of the apostles. As the apostles preached that *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*, whilst our Saviour was on earth, so after his resurrection, and ascension, they, according to their commission, preached it as actually come; they preached the gospel, and faithfully published every part of it, they neglected not to declare the whole counsel of God; as they had learnt the gospel from Christ, so, according to his command, they made it known to others. That any might be acquainted with the gospel, it was necessary that they should hear it, *but how should they hear without a preacher?* Therefore Christ sent forth his apostles to preach the gospel, and the gospel appeared not only by the preaching of the twelve apostles, but also very eminently by the preaching of the apostle *Paul*, and of multitudes of the first christians. See *Tit. i. 3. But hath in due times, manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour.*

3dly, The grace of God, or the gospel, appeared by the miracles that accompanied the preaching of it. Thus the gospel appeared beyond contradiction to be the true  
 grace

grace of God, for this was an undeniable SERM.  
evidence of its divine original and authority. XV.

Men might have talked of the grace of God, and have pretended to a divine commission for the publishing of it; but there could be no good proof of this, without the power of miracles. This preaching of a new dispensation from God, without miracles, would leave what was preached altogether uncertain, and would be of none or very little effect: But true and real miracles, together with the fitness of the doctrine, are an undoubted evidence of a dispensation coming from God. Therefore as Christ wrought miracles for the confirmation of his mission, to declare this grace of God, and the disciples also while he was on earth, so when after his resurrection, he sent them forth to preach the gospel, he furnished them with a power of doing wonderful works in his name, that their heavenly doctrine might, by this means, have its due influence on the minds of men. And thus the apostles, wherever they came and preached, wrought miracles: By which means the grace of God, in the gospel, and the truth of that dispensation, appeared in a most glorious and conspicuous manner, and with such a light, as by none, but wilful sinners, could be unheeded or disregarded. Thus we are told, that *the Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace, and granted signs and*

SERM. *wonders to be done by the apostles hands, Acts*  
 XV. xiv. 3. And the apostle *Paul* says, *My speech,*  
 { *my preaching was not with enticing words of*  
*man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spi-*  
*rit of power, 1 Cor. ii. 4.*

4thly, The grace of God, or the gospel, appeared, and does still appear in the writings of the apostles and evangelists. At the first, men received the doctrine of christianity from the mouths of the apostles; but even then, as the apostles could not be always in all places, for fear their doctrine should be corrupted in their absence, they committed the gospel to writing; by which means also it was still farther propagated and displayed, and thus it is conveyed down to us. We have nothing else to have recourse to, for the doctrine of the gospel, but those sacred writings; we have no infallible teacher to consult, as in the apostles times; oral tradition being so very uncertain, is justly of no force; and there is no need of it, for the scriptures contain all things necessary for faith and practice. Thus have we considered how the grace of God, or the gospel appeared. We come now,

IV. To consider how it appeared to all men; *The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men.*

1st, It appeared to men of all nations, to *Jews and Gentiles.* This is agreeable to the antient prophecies: *St. Luke* has these words  
 from

from *Isaiab*, *Luke* iii. 6. *And all flesh, i. e.* SERM.  
all men, *shall see the salvation of God.* And XV.  
*St. Paul*, from the same prophet, has these  
words, *I have set thee, i. e. the Messiah,*  
*to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou*  
*shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the*  
*earth,* *Acts* xiii. 47. And, according to these  
prophecies, Christ sent out his apostles to  
preach the gospel to all nations; he sent them,  
indeed, before his resurrection, only to the  
lost sheep of the house of Israel, and com-  
manded them, saying, *Go not into the way of*  
*the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samari-*  
*tans enter ye not.* But after his resurrection,  
he enlarged their commission, and sent them  
to all the nations of the Gentiles, as well as  
to the Jews: As, *Matt.* xxviii. 19. *Go ye,*  
*therefore, and teach all nations.* *Mark* xvi. 15.  
*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the*  
*world, and preach the gospel to every creature,*  
*or to all mankind,* *Luke* xxiv. 47. *And that*  
*repentance and remission of sins, should be*  
*preached in his name among all nations, begin-*  
*ting at Jerusalem.* And so, *Acts* i. 8. *And ye*  
*shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem,*  
*and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the*  
*uttermost part of the earth.* And the apostle  
says, *by whom we have received grace and*  
*apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all*  
*nations.* And, accordingly, the apostles ex-  
ecuted their commission and preached the



SERM. gospel to all nations. Thus we read, *Mark XV. xvi. ult. And they went forth, and preached*  
 every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. And the apostle speaking of the preaching of the gospel, says, *Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world, Rom. x. 18.* And in his famous doxology, at the end of this epistle, he expresses himself thus, *Now to him that is of power to stablish you, according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret, since the world begun; but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith.* I shall mention only two places more; in *Col. i. 6.* the apostle, speaking of the gospel, says, *which is come unto you, as it is in all the world.* And *ver. 23.* speaking of the same gospel, has these words, *which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I Paul am made a minister.* Thus we see that the gospel appeared to men of all nations.

2dly, The grace of God appeared to all men, so as that wherever it was preached, it was declared to belong to all degrees and conditions of men, and even to every individual that would accept of it. It was declared

clared to belong to all degrees and conditions of men, masters and servants, young and old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, noble and ignoble ; it was preached to all these indifferently, as belonging to them all : No degree or condition of men was excepted : No difference made between them with respect to the offers of the gospel, and the enjoyment of its blessings and privileges, if they did but sincerely embrace it. This is intimated by the apostle, Col. iii. 11. *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.* So, Gal. iii. 28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* And then it was also declared to belong to every individual that would accept of it ; as no condition of men, so no individual was excepted ; but in this respect also it was offered indifferently to all. The language of the gospel is, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ; Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved ; Whosoever believeth on the Son of God, shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life :* So that the gospel excludes none from a share in its privileges, but those who exclude themselves by unbelief, and persisting in a sinful course. Thus we see how the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared

SERM.

XV.

SERM. *peared to all men.* I should now come to  
 XV. shew, from the following verse, what this  
 { gospel teaches, but I shall leave this to another discourse; and shall conclude this, with a word or two of application.

1. Hereby we see, that our salvation is originally of meer grace. It is the grace of God, that brings the salvation we have described. The gospel itself, the whole dispensation of it, is all of grace, and if so, the salvation promised therein must be of grace too, and proceeds originally from the free favour of God: We could have merited no such blessing at his hands, by any works of ours. Thus the apostle speaking of the salvation of the first christians, especially of the idolatrous *Gentiles*, says, *After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, Tit. iii 4.—7.*

2. Let us bless and praise God for this his wonderful grace. This we have great reason to do, if we consider the wonderful salvation it brings to us. The happy effects of this grace are not confined to this life, but extend to the life to come, where, if we abuse

abuse it not here, it will put us in the possession of eternal happiness. Let us, therefore, bless God for his kindness towards us, in Christ Jesus; let us bless him for the gracious dispensation of the gospel, and for the everlasting consolation of good hope he has given us through his grace. SERM.  
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3. To conclude. Let us live answerable to this grace of God; let us have our conversation as it becomes this holy gospel. Tho' the gospel salvation is originally of mere grace, yet it is not so of grace, as that God will save us though we live as we list. No, we are required and called upon, *to work out our salvation with fear and trembling*, as knowing, that *without holiness, no man shall see the Lord*. Let us, therefore, follow after holiness, and endeavour to abound in all good works. Let us take heed, we turn not the grace of God into lasciviousness, nor abuse this his kindness towards us, which will be to our greater condemnation: But if we would be happy in the world to come, let us be holy in this, let us obey the commands of God, and live as the gospel teaches; and how that is, I shall shew more particularly, in my next discourse.



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# S E R M O N XVI.

Salvation wrought by the Grace of  
G O D.

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TITUS ii. 11, 12.

*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation,  
hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that  
denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we  
should live soberly, righteously, and godly in  
this present world.*

SERM. XVI. **I**N treating on these words, I proposed to  
consider,

- I. What we are to understand by this  
*grace of God.*
- II. The character that is here given of it,  
*it bringeth salvation.*
- III. Its appearance.
- IV. How it *appeared to all men.*
- V. What it teaches.
- VI. How this appearance of the grace of  
God is an argument for our leading a  
holy and righteous life.

The

The four first of these we have already S E R M. considered. And as to the first we told you, XVI. that the grace of God signifies his favour, love, and kind affection towards us ; and that by it here we are to understand either, in a proper sense, that grace and favour of God in particular, which he has displayed in the gospel, or, by a *metonymy*, the gospel itself wherein it is revealed, which comes to the same thing. And, if we take it in this sense, it signifies the whole oeconomy and constitution of the gospel.

As to the second, I told you, that the grace of God, or the gospel, brings salvation, forasmuch as, 1<sup>st</sup>, It delivers men from a sinful state, from the power, and reign, and pollution of sin ; it turns them from a sinful course, from the practice of impiety and unrighteousness, and reduces them to a holy life and conversation. This was most clearly seen in the beginning of the gospel, in turning away many of the *Jews* from their iniquities, and in delivering the *Gentiles* from their idolatrous state, which is called *the power of darkness*, and bringing them to the acknowledgment and worship of the true God, and the practice of holiness and righteousness ; and is still seen in the lives and conversations of the sincere professors of the gospel. 2<sup>dly</sup>, It brings salvation, in delivering men from the condemnation and punishment of sin, inasmuch, as by it, we have the remission

SERM. remission of sins, and are saved from misery

XVI. and death, the consequence and desert of our transgressions. Thus the *Jews* were delivered from the curse of the law, and the *Gentiles*, from the demerits of their crimes, and all who embrace the gospel have their sins forgiven, are delivered from the wrath to come, and shall not be hurt of the second death. 3dly, The gospel brings salvation, in that by it we have the promise of eternal life, and a blessed and glorious immortality in the world to come. As all men have sinned, so they have come short of the glory of God, but the gospel restores men to this glory. Christ has *brought life and immortality thro' the gospel*; by it believers, who *walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*, are made the *children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*, and so shall be glorified with him, and shall receive *an inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*.

As to the third thing, viz. the appearance of the grace of God, or the gospel. I told you, that it appeared, 1st, In the appearing and coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*. The grace of God was displayed in all the circumstances of his appearance. His kindness and love to men was shewn in a very glorious manner, in sending so excellent and beloved a person into the world

world in so mean and humble a condition, to converse with such sinful and unworthy creatures; the riches of the divine grace, and the whole doctrine of the gospel was displayed in our Saviour's preaching, which preaching was fully confirmed by his miracles and wonderful works: The divine *philanthropy* appeared in the highest manner in the sufferings and death of this glorious person; and the truth and certainty of all this is manifest in his resurrection from the dead. *2dly*, The grace of God, or the gospel, appeared by the preaching of the apostles, and others of the first christians; according to what is said, *Tit. i. 3. But hath in due times manifested his word thro' preaching.* As the apostles preached that *the kingdom of God was at hand*, whilst our Saviour was on earth, so after his ascension, they, according to their commission, preached it as actually come; they preached the gospel, and faithfully published every part of it; they neglected not to declare the whole counsel of God. *3dly*. The grace of God, or the gospel, appeared by the miracles that accompanied the preaching of it. Thus the gospel appeared, beyond all contradiction, to be the true grace of God, for this was an undeniable evidence of its divine original and authority. As our Saviour wrought miracles for the confirmation of his mission, and the disciples also, while he was on earth, so, when after his resurrection he sent them forth to

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SERM. to preach the gospel, he furnished them with  
 XVI. a power of doing wonderful works in his  
 name, that their heavenly doctrine might, by  
 this means, have its due influence on the minds  
 of men. And thus the apostles, wherever  
 they came and preached, wrought miracles;  
 by which means the grace of God in the  
 gospel, and the truth of that dispensation,  
 appeared in a most glorious and conspicuous  
 manner, and with such a light and lustre, as  
 by none, but wilful sinners, could be un-  
 heeded or disregarded. 4thly, The grace of  
 God, or the gospel, appeared, and does still  
 appear in the writings of the apostles and e-  
 vangelists. At the first men received the  
 doctrine of christianity from the mouths of  
 the apostles; but even then, as the apostles  
 could not be always in all places, lest their  
 doctrine should be corrupted in their absence,  
 they committed the gospel to writing; by  
 which means, also, it was still further propa-  
 gated and displayed; and thus it is conveyed  
 down to us, thus it appears to us.

As to the fourth thing, viz. How the  
 grace of God appeared to all men; I told  
 you, that it appeared, 1st, To men of all  
 nations, to *Jews* and *Gentiles*. This was a-  
 greeable to the antient prophecies. Christ  
 sent his disciples, before his resurrection, on-  
 ly to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*, and  
 commanded them, saying, *Go not into the*  
*way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the*  
*Samaritans*

Samaritans *enter ye not* : But, after his resurrection, he enlarged their commission, and sent them to all the nations of the *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jews*. And accordingly the apostles executed their commission, and preached the gospel to all nations. 2dly, The grace of God appeared to all men, so as that wherever it was preached, it was declared to belong to all degrees and conditions of men, and even to every individual that would accept of it.

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V. I come now to consider what this grace of God, or the gospel, teaches : And here I shall consider, 1st, The things that it teaches. 2dly, How it teaches them.

1. We are to consider the things that the gospel teaches ; it teaches us, *that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*. These words briefly contain the whole of what we should avoid, and what we should practise. The whole christian life is comprised in them.

1. The grace of God teaches us to *deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts*. And here I shall consider, 1st, What we are to understand by *ungodliness, and worldly lusts*. 2dly, What it is to deny them.

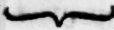
1. What are we to understand by *ungodliness, and worldly lusts* ?

1st, By *ungodliness*, ἀσέβεια, we are to understand, the want of that veneration that is

Z

due

SERM. due to God, or whatever is contrary to the

XVI.  worship, homage and respect that we owe unto him. Which is, 1. All idolatry, superstition, and false worship. Idolatry may well be called *ungodliness*, forasmuch as it is a forsaking of the true God, and the giving of that worship and honour to idols and false gods which is due unto him only : Hence the *Gentile* world, who were universally addicted to this vice, are, by way of eminence, called *the ungodly*. And as idolatry, so superstition, and all manner of false worship, such as is neither justifiable by the light of nature, nor any where appointed in the divine word, may very justly come under this character, which, tho' it may seem to shew a greater veneration of God, does really proceed from, and discover unworthy thoughts and apprehensions concerning him and his government, and so may very well be called *ungodliness*. 2. All stupid ignorance and senselessness of God, all atheistical and unbelieving thoughts concerning God, his providence, and the like, and all unbecoming apprehensions of his nature and attributes, are the *ungodliness* which we ought to deny. Many, who by the use of their reason and divine revelation might come to the knowledge of their Creator, remain notwithstanding carelessly ignorant of him : And others, willingly entertain unbelieving thoughts of him, study to evade the force of the proofs of his existence, which, to un-

prejudiced

prejudiced reason, are most clear and manifest, and willingly doubt of his providence in governing the world, and ordering the affairs of his creatures: And others again, tho' they believe all this, yet have willingly im-

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bibed corrupt and unworthy apprehensions of God, and of his attributes, of his justice, goodness and mercy, and the like; making him in effect to act unjustly, thinking he will not be so just as to punish wilful sin, and yet he will be so merciful as to pardon those who wilfully continue in it. Now all these are in some degree or other ungodly. 3. All practical irreligion and profaneness; such as perjury, or forswearing one's self; taking the name of God in vain, or to no purpose; all profane and rash swearing in common conversation; all vile scoffing and jeering at religion, which is too commonly practised by many; all contempt of the divine word, and disrespect shewn to the divine precepts; all neglect of religious worship, publick or private, and the like: All this is that *ungodliness* which the grace of God, or the gospel, teaches us to deny.

2dly, As to *wordly lusts*, by them we are to understand, 1. All intemperance and excess, all gluttony and drunkenness, all inordinate gratifications of our passions and appetites, all unlawful pleasure arising from carnal and sensual enjoyments, from luxury and uncleanness, and the like. 2. All immoderate



SERM. rate desires after, and love to the things of this

XVI. life ; the setting our affection on things on  
 the earth ; all covetousness, and inordinate love  
 of wealth, and riches, and worldly possessions ; all unjust, and unlawful ways of getting and encreasing these things ; all oppression, extortion, rapine, couzening and cheating ; all inordinate desires after worldly goods ; all immoderate pursuits after them ; all trusting in them ; all excessive joy in the possession of them ; all perplexing and tormenting fears of losing them ; and all excessive grief for being deprived of them. 3. All pride and ambition ; all high thoughts of ourselves, priding ourselves in ornaments and dress, or any thing else ; and all eager desires after high titles, and places of honour and dignity in the world. These, and such like, are the *κοσμικαὶ ἐπιθυμίαι*, the *worldly lusts*, spoken of in our text ; which are the same with what the apostle *John* calls the *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life* ; or the lust of pleasures, the lust of riches, and of making a fine appearance in the world, and the lust of power, dignity and authority ; and these he after calls the *lust of the world*. Thus we see what we are to understand by *ungodliness and worldly lusts*. We are,

2. To consider what it is to deny them, as the grace of God teaches ; *teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*. Now, to deny ungodliness and worldly  
 lusts,

lusts, is to renounce and forsake them, and SERM.  
take care that we never more admit them XVI.

in our heart or conversation: And so it is the same with repentance, which is the work of our lives, wherein we forsake our former evil ways and sinful courses, and deny ourselves for the future the pleasure we used to take in them. Thus to deny ungodliness, is to forsake and depart from whatever is contrary to the true worship of God, and to that veneration and respect which we owe to him; it is to abstain from idolatry, superstition, and all false worship; to banish from our minds all atheistical and unbelieving, all unbecoming and irreverent thoughts of God, of his attributes, his word, his precepts, his promises, and his threatenings; to renounce the love of any thing when it stands in competition with the love of God, and all confidence in any thing short of him, and to free our conversation from all prophaneness, irreligion, and rebellion against God. And to deny worldly lusts, is to deny ourselves of all unlawful desires and delights, of all sinful pleasures and enjoyments. It is to avoid all intemperance and excess, all sensuality and impurity; to renounce the love of the world, all earthly-mindedness, covetousness and unlawful gain; and to suppress the motions of pride and ambition that are apt to arise in us, and which are cherished by the men of this world. Thus the grace of God teaches us to

SERM. *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, and to avoid

XVI. *whatever is contrary to our duty to God, ourselves, or our neighbour. And we should, accordingly, flee from idolatry, and renounce all irreligion and profaneness: We should abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; should mortify the deeds of the body, and should crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts; we should cast off the works of darkness, and walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but should put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof; we should mortify our members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. We should take heed and beware of covetousness, and that our hearts be not overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life. And we should remember to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts; not only some sins, but all are to be forsaken and avoided; we should therefore renounce ungodliness in every instance of it, and should mortify and crucify every vicious lust, and every unlawful desire and practice: It should be the work of our lives to do this, not only to purge our conversation from sin, but to root it out of our hearts; we should always hate and abhor it; should keep at a distance, and turn away from it, and should*  
take

take care that we never admit of any thing, SERM.  
any desire or practice, that is contrary to the XVI.  
will and word of our Creator. Thus we  
have considered the first thing that the gos-  
pel teaches, *viz. denying of ungodliness and  
worldly lusts.*

2dly, The gospel teaches us to *live soberly,  
righteously, and godly in this present world.* It  
not only teaches us a negative religion, shew-  
ing us what we should deny and abstain  
from, as *all ungodliness and worldly lusts*; but  
also requires positive holiness and obedience  
to all the divine precepts, even all manner of  
good works: For under these three heads,  
the whole of our duty is contained; sobrie-  
ty, respecting the government of ourselves;  
righteousness, comprehending the duties we  
owe to our neighbour; and godliness, con-  
taining under it all the duties that respect  
God immediately. And these duties must  
not be separated from one another; it will  
not avail to be sober, unless we are also righ-  
teous; nor to be sober and righteous, unless  
we are also godly: They must be all prac-  
tised together, and that as long as we live,  
during our abode in this present world; we  
must *live soberly, righteously, and godly, in  
this present world.* I shall consider these du-  
ties in their order. And,

1st, Concerning sobriety; the gospel teaches  
us to live *soberly.* This virtue consists in the



SERM. due government of ourselves, and is discovered in several instances.

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1<sup>st</sup>, One main part of sobriety and temperance, whereby we moderate all our appetites, and our use of worldly pleasures and enjoyments. Thus as to eating and drinking, we should consider that the true design of them, is the sustentation of nature, and the preservation of life and health, and should never use them otherwise than is consistent with these ends; and all the pleasures we allow ourselves in, both as to the nature and measure of them, should be such as are justifiable by reason, and will never need our repentance; as will neither hurt our body nor debase our mind, nor render us unfit for the service of our Creator. Thus we are bid to add to our knowledge temperance, and temperance is said to be one of the fruits of the spirit. In this sense sobriety is opposed to intemperance.

2<sup>dly</sup>, Another main part of sobriety is in moderating our love to all earthly things, and having a superior regard to the things of heaven. Our desire of worldly possessions and enjoyments, should not be too eager and intense; our pursuits after them should be moderate, our joy in obtaining them, and grief, in case we should be deprived of them, should be kept within due bounds. We should not set our hearts on these perishing things; but should set our affections on things

things above, should place our happiness in SERM. them, and do our utmost to obtain them. XVI. In this sense, sobriety is opposed to fordidness and earthly-mindedness.

3dly, If we would live soberly, we must keep all our passions within their proper bounds and limits: We must not let our love or our hatred, our joy or grief, or any other passion, grow unruly and exorbitant, and exceed the bounds of reason. But especially the passion of anger should be carefully guarded, which, if it grow excessive, as it very easily does, if it be once admitted, is no better than a short phrenzy or madness, exceedingly disturbing the mind, and disordering the body, and producing often very dismal effects. And thus sobriety is opposed to all inordinate passions.

4thly, Sobriety also discovers itself in contentment with our outward state and condition; so, that though we are in mean and low circumstances, our mind is easy, serene and quiet, we readily acquiesce in the disposal of divine Providence, and are kept from murmuring and repining, because we are not in so good a condition as others. Thus the apostle says, that *godliness with contentment is great gain*; and he had learnt in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content, to have a self-sufficiency and fulness in the midst of the greatest want; and he exhorts the christians to *be content with such things*  
as

SERM. *as they have.* Thus sobriety may be considered, as opposed to discontent and uneasiness, at our outward circumstances.

5thly, Modesty and humility is also another great instance of sobriety; whereby we have mean and low thoughts, and a modest opinion of ourselves, are not wise in our own conceits, are not high-minded, nor puffed up with a vain and fond opinion of our own abilities and acquirements; but keep all thoughts, concerning ourselves and our attainments, within the bounds of reason. *Rom. xii. 3. For, I say, through the grace of God given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith.* In this sense, sobriety is opposed to pride.

6thly, This virtue also discovers itself in patience and constancy under affliction; whereby we bear all our sufferings with an even and calm temper of mind; are not ruffled nor disordered thereby, nor moved from the way of piety and holiness. In this sense sobriety is opposed to impatience. Thus we see what is that sobriety which the gospel teaches.

2dly, The second thing which the gospel teaches us to practise, is righteousness; it teaches us to *live righteously*. Under this head

head is contained all our duty to our neighbour, as justice and charity. SERM.  
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1<sup>st</sup>, The first branch of our duty to our neighbour is justice, which consists in giving every one his due, in paying every one his own, and being faithful and true to our word. Thus the apostle exhorts, *Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.* We should be just and honest in all our dealings with one another, should take care that we injure none in any respect, that we do no wrong, that we do no injustice or violence to any, that we bring no evil or harm upon him, that we hurt him not in his person, in his reputation, in his estate, or in any respect whatsoever. Thus all men ought to behave towards one another; but there are some particular duties, that result from particular relations: Thus the wife should be subject to her husband, and the husbands should love their wives, and should not be bitter against them; children should obey their parents, and parents should take care of their children; servants should please their masters, and be faithful in their business, and masters should give unto their servants that which is just and equal; subjects should obey their governors in all lawful things, and governors should protect their subjects.

2<sup>dly</sup>,



SERM. 2dly, The second branch of our duty to  
XVI. our neighbour, is charity, which is of very  
large extent, for we should love our neighbour, *i. e.* all men, as ourselves. Accordingly, we should avoid all disrespect, all ill-will, envy and malice against our neighbour; and should maintain a kind, tender and compassionate respect for him; should bear no grudge, rancour or hatred in our breast against any, but should have a sincere love, a hearty affection, a constant and unfeigned good-will towards all men. We should also maintain a kind, respectful and courteous behaviour towards others; our words and gestures should be as inoffensive as possible, void of all reproach and reflection, of all wrath and anger, of all haughtiness and scorn, and the like; and we should exercise a mild and gentle, a condescending, courteous and affable demeanour towards them: *Charity behaves not itself unseemly*, gives no reproachful language, makes use of no opprobrious or disgraceful reflections, treats no one rudely in words or actions, but uses a becoming and respectful carriage towards all. In the next place, we should do all the good we can to every one: We should help those who need our help, as far as our ability will permit; we should contribute to the supply of others necessities, as we have opportunity, and should endeavour to promote their temporal and eternal  
welfare

welfare. The apostle says, *As we have op-  
portunity, let us do good to all men, especially  
to those who are of the household of faith.* We **SERM.  
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should be compassionate towards them that  
are in misery, should sympathize with them,  
and commiserate them in their misfortunes  
and afflictions, and should, like the merciful  
*Samaritan*, endeavour to relieve them. We  
should study to further our neighbour's good  
in every respect, should take care of his re-  
putation, and if we know any thing amiss  
of him, we should be ready to conceal it;  
for charity covereth, or concealeth all things,  
*πάντα ᾄγει*, and love hideth all sins: We  
should do him all the good we can in his  
person and estate; for charity is not so selfish,  
as to seek her own merely. Finally, We  
should be ready to give him advice and  
counsel, to pray for him, and to do him  
good in his soul and body; we should de-  
sire and rejoice in, and to our utmost pro-  
mote his welfare in every respect. Further-  
more, Christian charity obliges us to avoid  
judging, censuring or condemning others.  
Our blessed Saviour most strictly prohibits  
this judging and censuring; *Judge not*, says  
he, *and ye shall not be judged, condemn not,*  
*and ye shall not be condemned*, Luke vi. 37.  
This practice is most unreasonable and un-  
christian, and altogether contrary to that  
love and charity which we owe to one ano-  
ther. We should hope the best, and believe  
the

SERM. the best we can of all, and should be ready

XVI. to put the most favourable construction possible upon all their actions; *Charity thinketh no evil*, or is not disposed to think evil, *Charity believeth all things, and hopeth all things*; it is ready to believe that good of others, that it has but the least ground for, and when there is some reason to doubt of a man's sincerity, it still hopes the best. To conclude this head, christian charity obliges us to forgive one another, and to be ready to pass by injuries that we may have suffered. This duty of forgiving one another, is most strictly enjoined by our Saviour, and without it, our charity is looked upon as imperfect. Thus have we considered the duties to be performed to one another, which the gospel teaches, in teaching us to *live righteously*. It teaches us to do to others, as we would reasonably expect and desire others to do to us.

3dly, The third great duty which the gospel teaches, is godliness; it teaches us to live *εὐσεβῶς*, piously and religiously. Now piety, or godliness, consists chiefly in these things, 1st, In loving God. 2dly, Fearing him. 3dly, Trusting in him. 4thly, Confessing and acknowledging him before men. 5thly, Worshipping and adoring him. 6thly, Obeying all his commandments.

1st, One main instance of piety, is in loving God, in having a sincere affection to him,

him, ardent desires after him, a hearty esteem SERM.  
 and value for him, taking delight and com- XVI.  
 placency in him, rejoicing in him, and the  
 like. Thus we should love God sincerely,  
 and above all persons and things besides,  
 with a prevailing affection and superlative re-  
 spect. As he is the most excellent Being  
 and the chief good, he is certainly to be  
 preferred before all, both in our judgment  
 and affection; and as he is our supreme Be-  
 nefactor, he undoubtedly deserves our great-  
 est love and respect; we should chuse him  
 and cleave to him above all, and place all  
 our happiness in him. Thus we are com-  
 manded to love the Lord our God, *with all*  
*our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind,*  
*and with all our strength, i. e.* with a sincere  
 and prevalent affection.

2dly, Godliness consists in fearing God.  
 As we ought to love God, so we should also  
 fear him, should have awful and reverential  
 thoughts and apprehensions of his divine ma-  
 jesty, should be duly impressed with a sense  
 of his excellency, of his exceeding great  
 power and glory, and should have a dread  
 of his sovereignty and supreme authority  
 over us. The fear of God, is so essential to  
 godliness, that it is often put for the whole  
 of it; and certainly, without it, we can have  
 no true piety at all. We should sanctify the  
 Lord of hosts in our hearts, and should  
 make him our fear and our dread; should  
 have



SERM. have an awful sense of his attributes, and a  
 XVI. due reverence of his authority, and should  
 ~~~~~ fear to offend him in any respect.

3dly, Another part of piety, is trust and confidence, and hope in God ; whereby we quietly commit ourselves to him, firmly depend on him, and expect the enjoyment of all good from him. We are often called on to trust in God, and to place our confidence and our hope in him : And truly if we consider his goodness and all-sufficiency, the many promises he has made to us, in his word, and the assurance he has given us of his love and grace, and mercy in Christ Jesus, we have abundant reason and encouragement to trust and hope in God.

4thly, Another act of piety or godliness, is confessing or acknowledging God before men. This is an external act of piety, as the others were internal. And certainly wherever true piety is in the heart, it will discover itself in suitable words and actions. In this confession and acknowledgment, we openly take the Lord Jehovah to be our God, we own his name and ways, and publicly declare ourselves both in words and actions, to be his servants ; we are not ashamed of him, of his Son Jesus Christ, nor of his gospel, but willingly profess ourselves subjects to it, and publicly avow ourselves to be the people of God.

5thly,

5thly, One material act of piety or godliness, is worshipping and adoring God. This is both internal and external, performed by the mind together with the body, which discovers the veneration we have for the divine majesty, and the disposition of the mind towards him, by humble and reverential gestures, such as kneeling, prostration, uncovering the head, lifting up the hands and eyes to heaven, and the like; which gestures we read of in scripture, as those, by which the servants of God testified their inward veneration for him. Now in this adoration, and worship, as we humbly ascribe all possible perfections to the divine Being, and bow our minds in a sense of them, so we pray to God and request blessings from him, and give him thanks for those we have already received, and bless and praise his great and glorious name. And we should always remember to worship him through the Mediator Jesus Christ.

Lastly, True piety is discovered in obeying all the commands of God, in obeying them as his commands, in complying with his ordinances, as his ordinances, in having respect to all his precepts, as his precepts: Thus, even the duties we owe to ourselves, and our neighbour, become a part of piety, as they are performed in obedience to God. And so much for the things the gospel teaches; I should now come to consider how

SERM. it teaches them; but this, with what remains, I shall leave to another discourse, and
XVI. shall conclude this, by exhorting you seriously to consider, and put in practice the virtues and duties I have briefly described to you, and to persevere in the practice of them. Let it be your constant care to abstain from all those vices, that are contrary to such a holy conversation, even to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts. Do you abhor that which is evil, and abstain from all appearance of it, and cleave to, and hold fast that which is good. Let sobriety, righteousness and godliness, adorn your whole conversation; that walking thus agreeably to the gospel, you may, with comfort, look for *that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; and may not be ashamed before him, at his coming;* but being of the number of those who do the will of his heavenly Father, may have *an entrance administered to you abundantly into his everlasting kingdom.*

SERMON XVII.

Salvation wrought by the Grace of
GOD.

TITUS ii. 11, 12.

*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation,
hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that
denying ungodliness and worldly lusts; we
should live soberly, righteously, and godly in
this present world.*

IN my first discourse on these words, I SERM.
XVII.
considered,

I. What we are to understand by this
grace of God.

II. How it brings salvation.

III. Its appearance.

IV. How it *appeared to all men.*

The *Vth* thing to be considered was,
What this grace of God, or the gospel
teaches.

And the *VIth*, How this appearance of
the grace of God is an argument for
our leading a holy and righteous life.

SERM. Under the fifth of these, I proposed to XVII. consider, 1st, The things themselves which the gospel teaches. 2^{dly}, How, and by what methods it teaches them.

The first of these was the subject of the second discourse; wherein I told you, that the gospel teaches, 1st, To *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*. 2^{dly}, To *live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world*.

1. The grace of God, or the gospel, teaches to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*. To *deny ungodliness*, i. e. to renounce, forsake and abstain from all idolatry, superstition and false worship; all unbelieving and atheistical, all unbecoming and unworthy thoughts of God; and all practical irreligion and prophaneness. *And worldly lusts*, i. e. all intemperance, wantonness and excess; all inordinate desires after, and love to the things of this world; and all pride and ambition.

2. The gospel teaches us to *live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world*. Under these three heads of sobriety, righteousness and godliness, is contained the whole of our duty in relation to ourselves, our neighbour, and to God. Sobriety contains our duty with respect to the government of ourselves; and consists in temperance, whereby we moderate all our appetites, and our use of worldly pleasures and enjoyments; in moderating our love to all

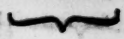
earthly

earthly things, and having a superior regard SERM.
 to the things of heaven ; in keeping all our XVII.
 passions within their proper bounds and li-
 mits, as our love, our hatred, our joy or
 grief, but especially the passion of anger ; in
 contentment with our outward state and con-
 dition ; in modesty and humility ; and in pa-
 tience and constancy under affliction. Righ-
 teousness contains our duty to our neighbour,
 as justice and charity ; justice, whereby we
 are bound to give every one his due, to pay
 every one his own, and to injure none by
 any means, nor in any respect : Charity,
 whereby we are obliged sincerely to love all
 men, to bear a kind affection to them, to
 shew a kind, respectful and courteous beha-
 viour to them ; to do them all the good we
 can ; to avoid judging, censuring and con-
 demning one another, and to forgive one ano-
 ther. Godliness contains our duty with re-
 spect to God ; and by it we are obliged to
love the Lord our God with all our heart, to
 fear and reverence him, and to trust and
 hope in him, to confess and acknowledge
 him before men, to adore and worship him,
 to pray and give thanks to him, and to obey
 all his commandments.

2. I come now to consider, how and by
 what methods the gospel teaches us these
 things.

1st, It teaches these things, by the many
 precepts and express commands of it. If we

SER M. examine the gospel of Christ, we shall easily
 XVII. find that it contains not only a discovery of
 the divine grace or favour to men, but also
 many precepts and commands, which strictly
 require us to maintain holiness, *i. e.* a
 virtuous, sober and pious life, and to order
 our conversation aright in every respect with
 regard to God, ourselves, and our neighbour.
 The gospel, by no means, gives liberty to men
 to live as they will, nor does it in the least
 countenance a licentious and vicious life, but
 requires, and expressly enjoins sobriety, right-
 eousness and piety, and purity and integrity
 in all our actions. Some of the commands
 of the gospel are very comprehensive, and en-
 join this holiness in general, as, *Rom. vi. 19.*
Yield your members servants to righteousness,
unto holiness. *Heb. xii. 14.* *Follow peace with*
all men, and holiness. *1 Pet. i. 15, 16.* *Be*
ye holy in all manner of conversation; and be
ye holy, for I am holy. And as holiness con-
 sists in the exercise of the virtues which are
 mentioned in our text, in *living soberly, right-*
eously and godly in the world, so whatever
 precepts enjoin holiness or virtue in general,
 they must be understood to enjoin all those
 virtues, and all the particular duties contained
 under them. And as there are many of
 these general commands in the gospel, so
 there are many particular ones that enjoin the
 exercise of sobriety, righteousness, charity,
 and godliness in particular. Thus in some
 parts

parts of the gospel we are commanded to love SERM.
the Lord our God with all our heart, with all XVII.
our soul, with all our mind, and with all our 
strength; to fear and reverence him, to adore
 and worship him, and to perform the several
 duties that immediately respect him; to pray
 to him, to bless and praise his name, and to
 return him the thanks that are due for the
 many blessings he bestows upon us. In other
 places we are commanded to be just and
 righteous, to give every one his own, and to
 render to every one his due, and to injure
 none by our words or actions; to be cha-
 ritable and beneficent, to love our neighbour
 as ourselves, and to do good to all as we
 have opportunity: And, *finally, Whatsoever*
things we would that men should do to us, to do
so even to them. And again, elsewhere we
 are required by the precepts of the gospel,
 to exercise all those duties that relate to the
 government of ourselves; to be sober, chaste,
 and temperate, humble and modest, patient
 and contented, and the like; to take heed to
 ourselves, that our hearts be not over-charged,
 and to *set our affections on things above, and*
not on things on the earth, and to order all
 our thoughts, words and actions in a becom-
 ing manner. *Finally,* We are in the gospel
 most strictly required to depart from all ini-
 quity, to abstain from fleshly lusts, to aban-
 don a sinful and impious course of life; and,
 as in our text, to *deny ungodliness and worldly*
lusts;

SERM. *lusts*; and we are expressly and frequently—

XVII. commanded to follow after righteousness, holiness, piety, charity and sobriety, and all manner of good and commendable actions. How often is the performance of good works enjoined us in the gospel, and the practice of holiness and virtue urged most plainly and expressly therein? We are there commanded to *mortify the deeds of the body, to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, and to walk after the spirit*; to oppose all the dictates of corrupt and inordinate affections and passions, and to *walk in newness of life*. All the precepts of the gospel are holy, and enjoin holiness in every respect; and so it teaches us, by precept, to *deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*.

2dly, As the gospel teaches us these things by precept, so it does by example, the holy and spotless example of Jesus Christ, the founder of it. Our blessed Saviour, while he was on earth, instructed men, and was a light to them, not only by his doctrine, but by the holiness, and perfect purity of his conversation. His whole life was, as it were, one continued act of goodness, holiness and charity, and a continual exercise of the most enlarged piety and virtue. He was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners*; he became a familiar example of holiness and righteousness to us, and his conversation on earth

earth is frequently proposed for our imitation. SERM.
He gave us remarkable instances of piety in XVII.
his whole life, and shewed us, by his ex-
ample, how we ought to reverence and wor-
ship God, and wherein his true service does
consist; he was a bright and glorious pattern
of righteousness, charity and meekness; he
went about doing good, and spent his life in
acts of kindness, and in works of charity and
mercy. He was innocent and compassionate,
peaceable and gentle, was always doing good
to the souls and bodies of men, and pro-
moted the true welfare of all with whom he
conversed. His life was altogether spotless
and unblameable, and his conversation was
entirely free from all kind of disorder; he
*did no sin, neither was guile found in his
mouth*; he injured none, but did good unto
all, even to his greatest enemies and perse-
cutors. His mind was not disordered by any
irregular passion or appetite, nor his conver-
sation polluted by any vicious practice: Tho'
he was subject to the innocent infirmities
of human nature, yet he was perfectly free
from sin, and was never guilty of any irre-
gularity, but his conversation was altogether
holy and pure, and all kind of virtues ap-
peared most conspicuous in him; he main-
tained holiness in every respect, and made
the will of his heavenly Father the rule of all
his actions; nothing but conformity to the
divine will, and obedience to the divine law,

SERM. was to be seen in him ; every thing that is
 XVII. sinful and unlawful was constantly avoided
 by him, and he was addicted only to what
 is good, and just, and holy. His example,
 in the highest manner, recommended sobriety,
 righteousness and godliness ; and, as I
 said, is frequently in scripture proposed for
 our imitation ; as, *Eph. v. 2. Walk in love, as
 Christ also hath loved us. Phil. ii. 5. Let this
 mind be in you, which was also in Christ Je-
 sus. 1 John ii. 6. He that saith he abideth
 in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as
 he walked. 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22, 23. Christ al-
 so suffered for us, leaving us an example, that
 we should follow his steps ; who did no sin, nei-
 ther was guile found in his mouth ; who, when
 he was reviled, reviled not again, when he
 suffered he threatned not, but committed him-
 self to him that judgeth righteously. Thus
 then Jesus Christ, the author of the gospel,
 being perfectly holy and pure, and his ex-
 ample being frequently recommended to us
 in it, we are certainly thereby taught to be
 holy in all manner of conversation, even to
 deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live
 soberly, righteously, and godly in this present
 world.*

3dly, The gospel teaches us these things,
 in that it every where acquaints us, that it
 was the design of this dispensation to pro-
 mote them. The design of the gospel is de-
 clared to be, not only our salvation from the
 con-

condemnation and punishment of sin, but also, and in order thereunto, from the power and dominion of it, and the promotion of holiness and righteousness in the world; that we might be delivered from the pollution and disorder of our minds, and turned from an irregular and sinful conversation; that we might be set free from the dominion of our transgressions, and might serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. The gospel acquaints us, that the design of God in sending his Son Jesus into the world, was to turn men from their iniquities, as well as to deliver them from the wrath to come; and that our Saviour came, not only to make an atonement for sin, but to encourage and advance holiness and piety, and to reduce men to the practice of righteousness; not only to *redeem us from all iniquity*, or from the punishment of our crimes, but to *purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*; to purge us from the defilement of our iniquities, as well as to obtain for us the pardon of our transgressions: And accordingly his doctrine and example, and all his actions, manifestly tended every way to discourage and discountenance ungodliness and unrighteousness, and to recommend a holy, righteous and pious life. *Finally*, We may see, by the whole current of the gospel, that holiness is the design of this glorious dispensation, and that righteousness, piety, sobriety,

SERM. ty, and all kind of good works, are all along
XVII. aimed at in it. It is declared in the gospel,

that *God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness*; and that his design therein is, that we should *be holy, and without blame before him in love*: It is said, that *we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them*, Eph. ii. 10. And therefore the discourses of our Lord himself, as also the writings of his apostles, abound every where with exhortations, encouragements, exhortations and intreaties to the performance of good works, and the exercise of a religious and holy course of life. Thus the gospel teaches us to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*, by teaching us, that it is the design of the gospel that we should so do.

4thly, The gospel teaches men to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, by the threatenings that are therein denounced against all who persist in such courses. The gospel threatens the wicked with the severest punishment. Impenitent sinners, who refuse to turn from their sins, and to betake themselves to a holy life, shall not only be deprived of the happiness and glory promised in the gospel, but shall be condemned to the greatest pain, misery and destruction in the world to come; and this the gospel plainly declares. There
we

we read, that the Lord Jesus shall be revealed SERM.
from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flam- XVII.
ing fire, taking vengeance on them that know
not God, and that obey not the gospel of our
Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with
everlasting destruction from the presence of
the Lord, and from the glory of his power,
2 Theff. i. 7, 8, 9. In the gospel, the wrath
of God is revealed from heaven against all un-
godliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold
the truth in unrighteousness. There it is de-
clared, that God will render indignation and
wrath to them that are contentious, and obey
not the truth, but obey unrighteousness; and that
tribulation and anguish shall be upon every soul
of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and
also of the Gentile. In the gospel we are in-
formed, that God will reward every one ac-
cording to his works; and he assures men,
that except they repent, they shall all perish:
We are told, that the impenitent man trea-
sures up to himself wrath against the day of
wrath, and revelation of the righteous judg-
ment of God. Now, if the gospel declares,
that persons who persist in a sinful course
shall be rewarded according to their works,
i. e. shall not only lose the glory of the righ-
teous, but shall have the severest punishment
inflicted on them, one would reasonably ex-
pect, that all to whom the gospel appears,
with evidence and authority, should be de-
terred from such a practice hereby, as many
have

SERM. have been and are; and thus the gospel
 XVII. teaches men to *deny ungodliness and worldly
 lusts.*

5thly, The gospel teaches men to do thus, and to *live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world*, by the many great and glorious promises therein made to persons who so live. The gospel contains various promises of pardon and salvation, of eternal felicity and glory in the world to come; and all the promises are declared to belong to them who repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance, and to them only. The remission of sins is undoubtedly annexed to repentance; this is plain from several scriptures; *John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*; the apostles were sent to preach *repentance and remission of sins to all nations*; and the apostle *Peter* exhorts the *Jews* to *repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out*. Now it must certainly be a very great encouragement to repentance, that the forgiveness of sins is promised to it, and that God will pass by our transgressions, and forbear to punish us for them, if we repent and turn from them, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance: But the gospel assures us, that we shall not only have our sins forgiven, *i. e.* be delivered from the punishment of them, if we thus repent, but be raised to the enjoyment of the highest happiness and glory, and that for
 ever,

ever, if we persevere in well-doing. The SERM. promises of eternal life and glory are made XVII. only to the righteous, to those who follow after holiness, to those who sincerely obey the laws of Christ, to those who *mortify the deeds of the body*, and *have their fruit unto holiness*; and certainly this must be a great encouragement and inducement unto repentance, and new obedience, to forsake sin, and follow after righteousness in all the parts of it.

6thly, The gospel teaches us to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world*, by means of the influence and assistance of the Holy Spirit. The gospel not only commands, and enjoins, and recommends holiness, but also promises and affords all suitable assistance for that purpose. It is certainly a most difficult thing for any that have been accustomed to sinful practices, and have thereby contracted many vicious habits, to cast off such practices, and to conquer such irregular dispositions; but, tho' this be so hard a matter, God has assured us in the gospel, that he will grant his gracious assistance to them who sincerely desire, and endeavour to do his will, to enable them to avoid sin, and to execute all the parts of their duty; and there is such an influence, and sacred energy conveyed to men thro' the gospel, as is sufficient to dispose, and prepare their minds, and to assist them

SERM. them to obey the divine precepts. We have,
 XVII. in the gospel, the promise of the Holy Spirit, by whose influence, and assistance, we may be enabled to forsake that which is evil, and to cleave to that which is good. God has engaged, in his word, to afford us his gracious help, whereby we may be prepared to withstand all temptations, and has assured us, that he will enable us to go thro' all afflictions that we may endure for the sake of a good conscience. He, by his grace, or favour, which is conveyed in the gospel, gives men all necessary assistance for repentance, to enable them to turn from sin, and to correct their vicious habits; and affords his servants all suitable help and ability to continue in the exercise of their duty, which should certainly be an inducement to them to use their utmost endeavours herein; as the apostle makes use of it as an argument to persuade them to it, *Phil. ii. 12, 13. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is the Lord who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*, i. e. do you endeavour earnestly to avoid sin, and to persist in the practice of your duty, seeing God graciously excites, disposes, and enables you so to do. Thus have we seen how, and by what methods the gospel teaches us to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,*

lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly, SERM.
in this present word. It teaches us this by XVII.
 precept, by example, by the manifest and
 constant design and scope of it, by the
 threatenings and promises of it, and by the
 influence and assistance of the holy spirit.

VI. I come now to the sixth and last thing, which is to consider, how this appearance of the grace of God or the gospel, is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life. This may appear, in great measure, from what has been already observed; but I shall add some further considerations.

1st, The grace of God thus appearing, and teaching us these things, is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life, if we consider the sufficient knowledge of our duty, and of the nature of such a life, that we may have thereby. Those to whom the gospel has appeared, are inexcusable, if they lead not a holy life, seeing this gives them so clear a view of it, contains so plain a declaration of the will of God, with respect to our duty. Indeed, the light of nature might have instructed us in the chief parts of our duty; but notwithstanding this, it is certain, that before the gospel of Christ was published to the world, the light of nature was very much obscured, through the constant practice of vice, the prevalency of bad custom, and the strength of evil habits; and we may very well think, that without such a
 B b discovery

SERM. discovery of our duty, as the gospel of Christ
XVII. contains, a man, though honest and sincere,
may, by the perpetual example of those
about him, and the force of an inveterate
custom, be very easily led into many mis-
takes in this respect. But they who have
the gospel, have no excuse for the neglect of
their duty; for this contains so clear a ma-
nifestation of it in every respect, that it must
argue either great negligence or wickedness,
if we conform not to the practice of it. By
the gospel we may plainly see every thing
that should be avoided by us, what is dis-
pleasing to God, and unbecoming our na-
ture; and therein, every thing that is agree-
able to the divine will, and ought to be
practised by us, is plainly and clearly ex-
pressed. The gospel teaches us fully and
expressly how we ought to walk to please
God; it not only describes our duty in ge-
neral, gives us a complete view of our duty;
but acquaints us with all the several parts of
it: It teaches us how we ought to worship
God, and what disposition of mind becomes
us towards our great Creator; it lets us
know how we ought to carry it, in every
respect, to one another, and what duties
are required of us in the several relations we
stand in; it shews us how to govern our-
selves, and how we ought to behave our-
selves, in every condition: Finally, no part
of our duty is omitted in the gospel, but
every

every thing that is requisite for us to per- SERM.
 form, so clearly expressed, that we cannot XVII.
 be unacquainted with it, without being guilty of wilful ignorance. Now, as the more plainly our duty is declared to us, the more inexcusable we shall be, if we conform not our practice to it; so this appearance of the grace of God, or the gospel, is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life, forasmuch, as hereby, we have the plainest declaration of our duty.

2dly, The grace of God thus appearing, and teaching these things, is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life, forasmuch as the divine authority appears so manifestly therein. As God is the only supreme Being, our Creator and rightful Governor and Lawgiver, his authority ought to be had in the greatest veneration and respect by us: But as God is the author of the gospel, and accordingly, what it teaches, the divine authority teaches, when men neglect to comply with it, and on the contrary live an unholy life, they despise and trample upon their Creator's supreme authority, than which there cannot be a greater, nor more heinous crime: Therefore, on the contrary, seeing the authority of God appears in the gospel, and in what it teaches, we should sincerely comply with it, that is, with a holy, righteous and pious conversation, that

SERM. thereby we may testify our just veneration
XVII. for the supreme authority.

3dly, If the grace of God has appeared, teaching us these things, we ought, in gratitude to him, to lead a holy life. Ingratitude is certainly a very bad crime, and the greater the benefactor is, to whom we are ungrateful, the greater is the crime of ingratitude; but God is our greatest and most gracious benefactor, which appears eminently in the gospel, that dispensation of his grace, which I treated of in my first discourse on these words; and therefore ingratitude to him, is the worst of crimes. But this crime we are certainly guilty of, if we do not lead a holy life, as the gracious dispensation of the gospel requires us. If we neglect to lead this life, we displease God, by disobedience to his will; and dishonour him, by contemning his authority; and so are certainly ungrateful towards him, and make very unsuitable returns to him, for his good-will to us, and his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. Gratitude is certainly due to every one, from whom we receive the least favour; how much more then, is it due to God, who has favoured us in the highest manner, and has displayed the riches of his grace towards us in the gospel? We should, therefore, testify our gratitude to God, for his wonderful love and mercy, by doing those things that please him, and that

tend to his honour and glory in the world, SERM.
i. e. by living according to the gospel in all XVII.
holiness and righteousness. }

4thly, The grace of God appearing and teaching us these things, is an argument for our leading a holy life and conversation, if we consider our own happiness, which this grace aims at, by so teaching us. The desire of happiness is natural and common to all; but the worst of it is, that most like not, and therefore chuse not, the way that leads to it: They would be happy, but in their own way, they do not like the way that God has appointed: But certain it is, that as the glory of God, so our own happiness ought to influence us, and the consideration thereof, should induce us to chuse the way of holiness and piety, which only will lead us to the enjoyment of true felicity. The christian religion is designed to make men happy, all the divine discoveries contained in the gospel, all the offers of grace that are made, and the rules of duty laid down therein, tend all to this end; so that if men would sincerely follow and comply with them, they would not fail of obtaining true and eternal happiness; but if they will not obey the gospel, but obey unrighteousness, *they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* The grace of God is designed to make us happy, but in the way

SERM. of holiness: Those who are workers of iniquity, shall not be admitted into the heavenly kingdom, and *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*; but if we would be happy hereafter, we must be holy in this world, and live as the grace of God teaches us. Thus I have shewn, how this appearance of the grace of God is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life.

And now having gone thro' these words, I shall conclude with some brief application.

1. Let us recal to mind this great truth, that the design of the gospel is to promote holiness and righteousness in the world; and therefore, our holiness and happiness are joined together in the gospel, and are by no means to be separated. All the most excellent benefits of this dispensation, are offered to us, and are to be enjoyed by us, only as we repent and turn to God; and the divine grace and mercy displayed therein, is proposed to us, with a view to encourage us to a holy life.

2. Let us not forget that our salvation is originally of mere grace. The gospel itself, the whole dispensation of it, is all of grace; and if so, the salvation promised therein, must be of grace too, and proceed originally from the free favour of God; we could have merited no such blessing at his hands, by any works of ours.

3. Let

3. Let us remember to bless and praise God, SERM.
 for this his wonderful grace. Let us bless him XVII.
 for this his kindness towards us, in Christ
 Jesus; let us praise him for the gracious dis-
 pensation of the gospel, and for the disco-
 very of his will therein contained.

4. To conclude. Let us all live as the
 grace of God, or the gospel teaches; let us
 lead a life as it becomes the gospel of Christ,
 and be holy in all manner of conversation,
 as knowing that *without holiness no man shall
 see the Lord.* If we turn the grace of God
 into lasciviousness, we shall receive the great-
 er condemnation; but if we would obtain
 the salvation that is in Jesus Christ with eter-
 nal glory, we must be holy in this life. Let
 us, therefore, sincerely forsake sin, and ab-
 stain from every kind of evil, and addict our-
 selves to the practice of holiness. Finally,
 Let us *deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts,
 and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in
 this present world.*

✍ The AUTHOR intended a fourth Discourse on this
 Text, to explain the Seventh Head enumerated in
 the first Sermon, but never composed it.

SERMON XVIII.

The Vanity and Uncertainty of human Life.

*Preached at the Funeral of Mrs. ELIZABETH MILTON *, at Namptwich, in Cheshire, on March 10, 1726.*

JAMES iv. 14. lat. part.

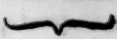
For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

SERM. XVIII. **T**HIS epistle was writ both to the believing and unbelieving *Jews*, to those who had embraced the faith of Christ, and those who had not. And, in the beginning of this chapter, the apostle seems to speak to the latter sort of *Jews*, who, as *Josephus* observes, were about this time fallen into great contentions, quarrellings and fightings in every

* Third wife, and relict of the Great Author of *PARADISE LOST*, who constantly attended our Author's ministry.

ry city, and almost in every family, not only SERM.
in Judea, but in other places where they XVIII.
were dispersed. Hence the apostle, taking
notice of this their disorderly carriage, says,
*From whence come wars and fightings among
you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts,
or pleasures, that war in your members? Ye
lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have,
and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye
have not, because ye ask not; ye ask and re-
ceive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may
consume it upon your lusts, or pleasures.* The
Jews, at this time, were vehemently desirous
of freedom from paying tribute to the Ro-
mans, and of dominion and authority over
the rest of the world, agreeable to the no-
tions they had conceived of the Messiah, that
he should set up a temporal kingdom, and
bring all nations into subjection to them:
For the sake of this worldly desire, they fell
out with all who were not of their mind,
they quarrelled, and fought, and even killed,
and yet they could not obtain the things they
so much desired, because they did not con-
cern themselves to ask, or enquire, whether
they were agreeable to the mind or will of
God: And tho' they asked, yet they did it
from very ill principles, and for bad purposes
and designs, viz. that they might consume it
upon their lusts, might make their dominion
over the world subservient to their luxury,
and the gratification of their vicious lusts and
desires;

SERM. desires; might live in wealth and plenty, in
 XVIII. ease and pleasure, in worldly grandeur, pomp
 and splendor. Then he speaks to these sensual and worldly-minded persons, as adulterers, and adulteresses; idolatry being frequently represented under the notion of adultery, and this love of the world, and making *mammon* their god, being no better than the heathen idolatry, and as much a departing from God, as appears by what the apostle says in this place; *Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.* He goes on, and asks them, *Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?* There being no such expression to be found in the old Testament, some read this verse thus, *Do ye think that the scripture speaketh in vain?* viz. against this sensual and worldly temper; *The spirit*, viz. the spirit of God, *that dwelleth in us, doth he lust unto envy?* making two questions of it. It follows, *But he giveth more grace*, i. e. the spirit of God that dwells in us, is so far from lusting to envy at the good and welfare of others, that he still bestows greater degrees of favour on men: *Wherefore he*, or it, i. e. the scripture, *saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace, or favour, unto the humble.* Having mentioned this happy privilege of the humble,
 he

he takes occasion, in the words immediately SERM.
following, to exhort them to the virtue of XVIII.
humility, *Submit yourselves therefore to God*; 
it follows, *resist the devil, and he will fly from*
you, i. e. oppose and withstand his tempta-
tions, who is the author and promoter of
those envyings and fightings among you, and
he shall not prevail over you. He proceeds
with his exhortations in the 8th verse, *Draw*
nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you:
cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your
hearts, ye double-minded, i. e. he would have
you draw nigh to God by prayer, repentance,
and obedience; or to believe the gospel, and
so to draw nigh to God, thro' Jesus Christ,
by whom both *Jews* and *Gentiles* have access
unto the Father; he would have them cleanse
their hands from violence and injustice; and
exhorts them who were divided in their af-
fections between God and *mammon*, or the
wavering christians who were divided, as it
were between *Judaism* and christianity, ei-
ther of which may be understood by the
διψυχοι, or double-minded, to purify their
hearts from the love of the world, which
either hindered them from embracing the
gospel, or tended to draw them off from it.
Then, continuing his discourse to the unbe-
lievers and back-sliders, he says, *Be afflicted,*
and mourn, and weep: Let your laughter be
turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness,
i. e. at the thoughts of the misery and cala-
mity

SERM. mity that was coming upon the *Jews*, not XVIII. only in *Judea*, but in all places where they were scattered abroad. Then he exhorts them again, to *humble themselves in the sight of the Lord, and he would lift them up*. In the 11th and 12th verses, he directs his discourse chiefly to the *Jewish* christians; *Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save, and to destroy: Who art thou then that judgest another?* The *Jewish* christians were very apt to judge and censure the *Gentile* believers for their non-observance of the law of *Moses*, saying, that unless they were circumcised, and kept that law, they could not be saved: Now, the law never requiring the observance of the things contained in it of the *Gentiles*, their censuring them for their non-compliance with it, was, in effect, passing a censure on the law, as if it were faulty, and defective, on that account: And as God never made the commands of the law obligatory to the *Gentiles*, it was presumption in any to make them so, or to pretend, that, without conforming to it, the *Gentiles* could not be saved; for God is the only lawgiver, who is able to save, and to destroy. From ver. 13. to the end of the chap. he sharply reproves such worldly-minded persons, as
for-

forgetting their own mortality, the uncertainty of all earthly things, and their necessary dependance on the divine providence, were so presumptuous as to resolve and purpose to do so, without regard to the divine will, as if life, and the advantages of it, were in their own power, and at their own command. *Go to now, ye that say, To day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings, viz. concerning the time to come; all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, i. e. after these warnings and instructions he had given them, and doth it not, to him it is sin.*

Having thus considered the scope and connexion of the words of our text, I shall now return to the consideration of them. *For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

These words very emphatically express the vanity of human life. When the apostle says, *What is your life?* he seems to be at a loss for something vain, empty, and transitory enough to compare it to; he presently likens it

SERM. it to a vapour, or gives it that name, *it is*
 XVIII. *even a vapour.* As a vapour rises suddenly,
 is seen but a little while, and then vanishes
 or disappears, such is the life of men in this
 world, they enter upon the stage, and make
 a shew for some time, and then die, go hence,
 and are no more.

Here it will be proper, *1st*, To consider
 the certainty of death, or how certain it is
 that our lives will one time or other have an
 end. We are not to abide here for ever ;
 there is no fixed or lasting state for us in this
 world, but the time will come, when death
 shall remove us hence ; we carry about with
 us bodies that are naturally liable to corrup-
 tion, and must, of consequence, at last yield
 to it ; as we cannot secure ourselves from
 sickness and diseases, so it is not in our power
 to ward off the stroke of death, to which all
 must of necessity submit. There is nothing
 we are surer of than death, that we must one
 time or other leave this world, and all its
 enjoyments. As we appear for a while in
 this world, so the time will come, when,
 like a vapour, we shall disappear, and be no
 more. Constant observation, and daily ex-
 perience, shews this to be the lot of all men.
 How many of our near relations, familiar ac-
 quaintance, and dearest friends, with whom
 we have intimately conversed, are now re-
 moved from our sight and company, and
 lodged in the silent grave, never to return to

us more : We are continually hearing of some SERM.
or other who are taken hence, and spectacles XVIII.
of mortality are daily before our eyes, of
which we have just now had an instance ; as
some are always coming into the world, so
others are daily, and even hourly, departing
out of it. Mankind are continually passing
away by death ; this has been their state from
the beginning of the world, and will be so
to the end of it. The longest livers have at
last had an end put to their lives ; antedilu-
vian patriarchs, who lived so many hundred
years, were forced, after all, to submit to
death's irresistible power. *One generation pass-
eth away, and another generation cometh,*
and none must expect to continue for ever.
Those who have been, now are not ; and
those who now are, will hereafter have no
being in this world. Death is the way of
all flesh, the inevitable portion of all men :
As we all became mortal in *Adam*, and it
is appointed for all men once to die, so there
is not a man living who shall not see death ;
not one will be able to deliver his soul from
the hand of the grave, which is the house
appointed for all living. All ages, degrees,
and conditions of men are alike liable to this
fate, young and old, learned and unlearned,
good and bad, high and low, rich and poor ;
*One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at
ease and quiet, his breasts are full of milk, and his
bones are moistened with marrow ; and another
dieth*

SERM. *dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never*
 XVIII. *eateth with pleasure ; they shall lie down alike*
 ~~~~~ *in the dust, and the worms shall cover them, Job*

xxi. 22—26. Death is common to every one ; all the living assuredly know that they must die, and how many years soever we live here, we shall at last go the way of all flesh, whence we shall not return. Thus, as *Job* says, chap. xiv. 10. *Man dieth, and wasteth away ; yea man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ?* So that, we see, every one will some time or other have an end put to his life here, and must unavoidably submit to the universal conqueror, death. But,

2dly, As we must certainly one time or other leave this world, and our lives must have an end, so the life of every one is at longest but very short and transitory. Our days here are but few, and our time here is but very short ; when a few years are come, we shall certainly go the way whence we shall not return. What are three or four-score years, when we seriously reflect on them ? and yet in that space, or thereabouts, all the present race of mankind will be certainly extinct. How fleeting and transitory a thing then is the life of man, when the utmost term of it, generally speaking, does not exceed seventy, or eighty years ? According as the Psalmist speaks, *The days of our years are threescore years and ten ; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is*  
*their*

*their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we flee away.* The life of the patriarchs was much longer than ours, and yet theirs was in itself but short. How very short therefore is man's life at this time? Those who live longest, when they look back on the time they have past over, it will appear to them as a dream. As we have no lasting continuance in this world, so the time of our continuance here is very short; as we must not abide for ever, so we cannot abide long in it. As death will certainly come upon us all, so it will soon come upon us; and as we can by no means entirely escape it, so it is in vain for us to think of putting it far from us. Our lives pass on very swiftly, and hasten to their final period; every day brings us nearer and nearer to our exit out of this world, and we are continually hastening to our latter end. The brevity and fleeting state of human life is set forth in scripture after a very affecting manner; as, *Job xiv. 1, 2. Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble: He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down, he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.* And, *ver. 5, &c.* of the forementioned xth *Psal.* *Thou carriest them away as with a flood, they are as asleep; in the morning they are as grass which groweth up: In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth.* And, *ver. 9. For all our days are*

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*passed*

SERM.  
XVIII.

SERM. *passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years*  
 XVIII. *as a tale that is told.* Again, Job vii. 6, 7.

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope; O remember that my life is wind. Chap. viii. 9. Our days upon earth are a shadow. Chap. ix. 25, 26. Now my days are swifter than a post; they flee away, they see no good: They are passed away as the swift ships, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey. 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. Psal. xxxix. 4, 5. Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee. Psal. ciii. 15, 16. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth: For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. And, to recite no more, Psal. cxliv. 4. Man is like to vanity; his days are as a shadow that passeth away. So short, so fleeting and transitory is human life, if we consider it in the utmost extent of it. But,

3dly, It is much more so, if we consider the uncertainty of it. As our lives, at longest, are very short, so they may be much shorter than we are willing to imagine; for death does not come upon all at the same age, but cuts down persons of all ages, from the oldest to the youngest. Nothing is more certain

than

than death, but the time of its approach is SERM.  
to us uncertain ; whether it may be sooner XVIII.  
or later we cannot tell ; and it may as well  
be sooner as later. The days of our years  
are indeed threescore years and ten, or four-  
score years ; but, alas ! how many are there  
who do not live out half these days, who  
are taken off even in the bloom of their  
years. Our lives are at best but very frail  
and uncertain ; *every man at his best state is*  
*altogether vanity*, Psal. xxxix. 5. We can-  
not promise to ourselves one day, no nor  
one hour longer to live in this world ; not  
one moment of time is in our power, but it  
all depends on the divine pleasure. We may  
indeed bring death upon ourselves much  
sooner than otherwise it would have come ;  
but, after all our care, we cannot insure the  
least time to ourselves. How many are there  
who die suddenly, tho' they were well, and  
in health, but just before ? And we know not  
but this may be our case. How many un-  
foreseen accidents are there that may bring us  
to our end ? And how many distempers and  
diseases are we liable to, which may sudden-  
ly seize upon us, and end in death ? Death  
assumes innumerable forms and shapes, and  
has various Ways of assaulting us ; sometimes  
with greater violence and fury, and some-  
times more slowly and deliberately, and we  
shall certainly one time or other be forced to  
submit to it ; but when, or how, we know



SERM. not. So very uncertain and precarious is human life, that whatever our present state or condition be, we cannot be sure of the least time to live : Our time is in God's hands, and is known to him alone, and those bounds he has set we cannot pass. In short, we know not how soon, or how suddenly we may be made to yield to the stroke of death ; how soon, or how suddenly, our life may have an end ; even before we are aware, we may be removed hence, and be no more. Thus then our life is a vapour, which will certainly disappear, will shortly disappear, and may very quickly and suddenly disappear.

Let us now make a few reflections on what has been said.

1<sup>st</sup>, If our life be so short and uncertain, we may from hence see the vanity of all worldly things. The vanity of life shews the vanity of all enjoyments here. Whenever death comes upon us, as it sends us out of the world, it puts an end to all earthly things with respect to us. As therefore life is short, these things, *viz.* all worldly actions and employments, pleasures and delights, possessions and enjoyments, are but of short continuance, and will soon end ; and as our life is uncertain, so these things are very uncertain to us. Indeed they are very uncertain and precarious of themselves, supposing we continued in the world ; all earthly riches, honours, and enjoyments are fading and perishing

rishing things ; we may have them to-day, SERM.  
but may be deprived of them to-morrow ; XVIII.  
they are liable to every accident, and the  
greatest uncertainty ; they may soon pass a-  
way from us, or, however, the pleasure of  
enjoying them may soon be lost. But death  
adds much to the vanity and uncertainty of  
of them ; they can be enjoyed by us no longer  
than we continue in the world ; and how  
short and uncertain the time of our abode  
here is, we have already considered. Death  
will put an end to all earthly pleasures and  
enjoyments ; as we pass out of the world,  
these things will certainly pass away from  
us ; we shall leave them all behind us, and  
shall never return to them more. Well there-  
fore might the Psalmist say, *Surely every man*  
*walketh in a vain shew ; surely they are dis-*  
*quieted in vain, he heapeth up riches, and*  
*knoweth not who shall gather them,* Psal.  
xxxix. 6.

2dly, If our life in this world be so short,  
and uncertain, how great is the mercy and  
goodness of God in providing for us, and  
promising to us everlasting life in the world  
to come. Mankind is naturally desirous of  
immortality, but as we are liable to death  
here, we should all our life-time have been  
subject to bondage, through the fear of it,  
if God had not provided a remedy against  
this evil and vanity, by setting before us a  
life to come, or an eternal state after a resur-  
rection.

SERM. rection. He sent his Son into the world,  
 XVIII. *that whosoever believes in him, should not per-*  
 ~~~~~ *ish, but have everlasting life.* Christ Jesus  
 has brought life and immortality to light by
 the gospel, and has by his death and resurrec-
 tion, delivered us from the fear of death,
 and the bondage of corruption. Though
 they who believe in him shall die, they shall
 not die for ever, but shall be raised again,
 and shall receive the adoption, to wit, the re-
 demption of their bodies. As we have here no
 continuing city, God has provided one for us
 in the heavenly kingdom; and all sincere
 christians may know, that when their earth-
 ly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, they
 have a building of God, an house not made
 with hands eternal in the heavens. Blessed
 be God, therefore, who of his abundant mer-
 cy, has begotten us again to a lively hope, by
 the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;
 to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled,
 and that fadeth not away, which is reserved
 in heaven for us.

3dly, If our lives here are so short and
 uncertain, how ought we, with speed, to
 prepare for our great change by death, and
 the future state of immortality, happiness
 and glory, in the world to come. They who
 repent not of their sins here, will be mise-
 rable in the future state; but all sincere pe-
 nitents, who do works meet for repentance,
 will, according to God's gracious promise,
 be

be eternally happy. As, therefore, we can SERM.
call no time to come our own, and our lives XVIII.
are so uncertain, how ought we to improve
the present time for our repentance and turning to God, and to make use of all opportunities in preparing ourselves more and more, by the exercise of virtue, for the blessed and eternal state above. We have but a little time to work in, and this time is very uncertain, and we have a great and most important work to do for our souls; how then should we lay hold on every opportunity, and improve every season for our eternal welfare, and not delay and put off our repentance, and the service of God from one time to another? The time present is the only time we are sure of; let us, therefore, improve this time, for working out our own salvation, lest, if we should not, we should be snatched hence unprepared; for then our state will be most dreadful, and the loss we have brought upon ourselves will be irretrievable.

4thly, If our state here be so fickle and uncertain, then let us set light by the things of this world, by all the pleasures and enjoyments thereof, and let us set our affection on the things above, which are of everlasting continuance. What folly is it for any to set their hearts on that which is so very uncertain and precarious, and which they are sure, in a little time, to leave? *Wilt thou set*

SERM. *thine eyes upon that which is not?* says Sol-
XVIII. *mon.* If we were to abide here for ever,

and were not designed for a more excellent state, it would not be strange, that we should set our hearts on earthly enjoyments; but seeing this is not our rest, and there is no continuance for us here, we should not set our affection upon this perishing and vain world, should not mind the uncertain enjoyments of it; but should desire and set our hearts upon the felicity of the everlasting kingdom, and aspire after those heavenly and divine delights which never cease; we should look upon all the pleasures, riches and honours of the world, to be vain and empty things, and should learn duly to esteem and value the substantial and lasting enjoyments of the heavenly state; should endeavour to be weaned more and more from the one, and to be more desirous of the other.

5thly, If our time be so uncertain, we should, in all worldly business, purposes and resolutions, have regard to the divine will and disposal; and should say, *if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that*, according to the apostle's advice in the context. We should be so mindful of our own frailty and mortality, and of the divine power and sovereignty herein, as not to purpose or undertake any thing rashly, as in our own time and strength, as those did
whom

whom the apostle here reproves: We should S E R M.
not boast ourselves of to-morrow, seeing we XVIII.
know not what shall be on the morrow, or ~~~~~
what a day may bring forth.

Lastly, To conclude: Let us be frequently meditating on death, that will certainly be our lot, on the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the vanity of all worldly things; and let the present dispensation which occasioned this discourse, particularly induce us so to do. This is a very proper and necessary subject for our thoughts, and would yield us unspeakable advantage; serious consideration on the vanity and uncertainty of our present state, will put us upon making suitable preparation for death, and for the life to come; will tend to dispose the mind to virtue, and to prepare it for those excellent employments, which will yield eternal fruit. Let us, therefore, often meditate on these things, not putting far from us the evil day, but still remembering our latter end, that we may be induced speedily to repent, and to exercise ourselves in doing the will of God, in order to the obtaining eternal life and glory in heaven; for though *the world passeth away, and the lust thereof*, and our lives here are as a vapour which suddenly disappears, yet all they who do the will of God, shall abide for ever, in the incorruptible mansions of bliss and glory.

SERMON XIX.

The Frailty of all Worldly Enjoyments.

Psalm - 10 - 2 I JOHN ii. 17.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.

SERM.
XIX.

DISCOURSES that treat of the vanity, uncertainty and transitory nature of human affairs, of all worldly possessions and enjoyments, can scarce ever be out of season. As daily experience and observation witnesseth to this truth; as the serious consideration of it, and frequent meditations upon it, are necessary to induce us to seek our rest and happiness in another state; and as men generally, notwithstanding, are very thoughtless about it, and appear to have but slight impressions from it, it must, without doubt, be most fit and proper, to take all opportunities to put them in mind of it, to recal their thoughts to most serious contemplations

temptations upon it, to shew them how they ought to be affected thereby, and what influence it should always have on their life and conversation. SERM.
XIX.

Among all the seasonable warnings and admonitions in the sacred writings, none gives us a more affecting account in general, of the instability and vanity of all worldly things, than the words I have now read to you; which also contain a remedy against this vanity, and shew how this unhappiness may be surmounted, and are therefore very proper to be insisted on. But that we may come regularly to them, we must observe, that in the 15th verse, the apostle is cautioning christians against an inordinate affection to the things of this life; *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world*; and as a reason of this dehortation, he adds, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*; and, in the following verse, he goes on further to shew, that the inordinate love of the world and the love of God, must needs be inconsistent, forasmuch as these are opposite one to the other; *For all that is in the world, all that is in vogue and esteem there, viz. the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, all intemperance, covetousness and ambition, is not of the Father, but is of the world*. And then as a further inducement, not to set their affection

on

SERM. on things on the earth, he adds in the words
 XIX. of the text, *And the world passeth away, and
 the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of
 God, abideth for ever.*

In treating on which words, I shall,

- I. Consider the vanity and perishing nature of all worldly things, from the former part of the verse, *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.*
- II. The remedy against this vanity, contained in the latter part of the verse, *But he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.*

I. Let us consider the transitory and perishing nature of all earthly things, expressed in these words, *The world passeth away, and the lust thereof.* Though the word world admits of various senses in scripture, it is easy to see, that by these expressions, is meant, that the state of affairs in this life, is very fleeting and transitory, of a decaying and perishing nature, of a short continuance, and will soon end: And we shall consider the first of these expressions in three respects. *The world passeth away.* 1st, It is always varying; it is in a constant flux and alteration. 2^{dly}, It so passes away, as in time, to have a final period and entire dissolution. 3^{dly}, (which more nearly concerns us) It passes away, so as to have an
 end

end with regard to every particular person, SERM.
at his death. XIX.

1st, The world is in continual flux and alteration, and so is still passing away. It is in a very variable and changeable condition. There is no settled and fixed state here, neither with regard to persons nor things, they are unavoidably subject to change, and never continue long the same. There is, and has been from the beginning, a constant course of succession of persons in the world, some continually dying, and others coming up in their stead. No generation must expect to continue for ever, but all must, in a few years, cease in their course, and leave the earth to the next succeeding. Thus those who have been, now are not; they who now are, in a little time, will not be; and they who shall arise, must still undergo the same fate, must die, and give place to others that come after them. Our fathers are gone, and we are risen up in their stead, and in a short time, we must go off the stage, and leave it to be acted upon by others. Thus, as the wise man says, *one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh*; so it has been from the beginning of the world, and so it will be as long as the earth remains. All the present inhabitants of the earth, who are now in the world, will in three or four-score years, or a very few more, be certainly extinct, which is a very awful consideration,

SERM. deration, though so little thought on by us,
 XIX. and a new race will succeed, but for no
 longer a time than the former; and so on
 to the end. And as it is thus with regard
 to men, or persons, so it is with respect to
 the things of this world: They are all mu-
 table and changeable, and never continue
 long in one situation; what persons possess
 to-day, they may be deprived of to-morrow,
 or in a very short time; they may be rich
 and at ease at one time, poor and in trouble
 at another time: Grief often succeeds joy,
 pain succeeds pleasure, and sickness health;
 possessions pass from one owner to another,
 and what one generation has acquired, ano-
 ther generation enjoys. Thus the world is
 always in a transitory condition, in a con-
 tinual flux and alteration, and *all that cometh*
is vanity.

2dly, The world so passeth away, as in
 time to have a final period and entire disso-
 lution. As now there is a constant succeſ-
 ſion in the world from generation to gene-
 ration, ſo, after a time, there will be an end
 put even to ſuch ſucceſſion; and with re-
 gard to the preſent ſtate, mankind will be
 no more. As the world is ever paſſing
 away, in its fluctuating and changeable con-
 dition, ſo hereafter it may be ſaid, that it is
 actually paſſed away, there being an end
 put to the ſtate of affairs here, and all things
 being entirely diſſolved. Thus we read fre-
 quently

quently of the end of the world, which, SERM.
though it has other significations in scripture, XIX.
yet sometimes signifies this grand period we
are speaking of: When not only the state of
things here, the affairs and transactions, the
works and devices, the pleasures and en-
joyments of this world shall have an end,
but the earth itself, the stage whereon these
things were transacted, shall undergo a sur-
prizing alteration, be removed, and together
with its heaven or air, shall be dissolved, and
that by fire. This is very plainly declared
in scripture, 2 Pet. iii. 7. *The heavens and
the earth which are now, by the same word
are kept in store, reserved unto fire against
the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly
men.* And, verse 10. *The day of the Lord will
come as a thief in the night, in the which the
heavens shall pass away with a great noise;
and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,
the earth also, and the works that are therein
shall be burnt up.* And so, ver. 12. *Looking
for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of
God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall
be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with
fervent heat.* And to this purpose also, is
what we read, Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. *And thou
Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the founda-
tion of the earth; and the heavens are the
works of thine hands. They shall perish, but
thou remainest; and they all shall wax old, as
doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou
fold* ✓

SERM. *fold them up, and they shall be changed; but*
 XIX. *thou art the same, and thy years fail not.*

Thus we see that the world so passeth away, as that at last, it shall suffer a final dissolution, and an entire period shall be put to the present state of things. God who made it, can as easily destroy it, and according to his word, will destroy it.

3dly, The world passeth away so as to have an end, with respect to every particular person at his death. This, as I said, more nearly concerns us, for tho' the world may not be actually at an end in our time, yet death, with regard to us, and every particular person, is equivalent to it; for when we die, the world is ended as to us, or any action, concerns, or enjoyments we shall have in it again: We shall never return to our former possessions, to our former relations and friends, to our former works and employments, to our former pleasures and enjoyments, we shall never return to them more. We shall never act a part more in this world, or in this present state of things. When we lie down in our graves, we shall not rise till the heavens be no more; we shall not awake, nor be raised out of our sleep: We shall not return to our house, and the place that knew us shall know us no more. Now, that the world passeth thus away, daily experience shews; there is nothing we are surer of than death, constant obser-

observation proves it to be the lot of every SERM.
 one : As it is appointed unto men once to XIX.
 die, so there is not a man living who shall
 not see death ; none will be able to deliver
 his soul from the grave. Thus the world
 passeth away with regard to every one ; for
 we shall all certainly pass out of it, and leave
 it behind us. And truly it passeth thus a-
 way very swiftly ; every day brings us nearer
 and nearer to our exit out of it, and we
 are continually hastening to our latter end. *Our*
days are but few, and they are swifter than a
post; and flee away ; they are passed away as
the swift ships, as the eagle hasteth to the prey.
Man is like to vanity, and his days are as a
shadow, that passeth away ; in such expres-
 sions as these is the frailty of human life set
 forth in scripture. Our lives at longest are
 very short, consisting of but very few years :
 When a few years are come, we shall cer-
 tainly go the way whence we shall not re-
 turn ; *for the days of our years are but three-*
score years and ten ; and if by reason of strength
they be fourscore years, yet is their strength but
labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and
we flee away. But how many are there who
 do not live out half these days, who are ta-
 ken off even in the bloom of their years ?
 For as our lives are short, so they are very
 uncertain, there is not one day, nor hour, of
 it to come that we can be sure of. How
 fleeting and transitory, how frail and uncer-

SERM. tain is human life, *it is even a vapour, that*

XIX. *appeareth for a very little time, and then vanisheth away.*

How many are there who die suddenly? and we know not but this may be our lot. How many unforeseen accidents are there that may bring us to our end? And if not so, how many diseases are we liable to, which often may end in death? And this is applicable to every age of man, and to all ranks and conditions: The young die as well as the old; those who are rich and in prosperous circumstances, as well as the poor and miserable; kings as well as their subjects. For God judgeth those that are high: *One dieth in his full strength, or in the strength of his perfection, being wholly at ease and quiet; his breasts, or as it may be read in the original, his milk-pails, are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow* (he has health and prosperity, and yet he dies, all the goods of body and fortune,) *and another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure: They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them,* Job xxi. 22—26. This state of mortality, which all men are alike subject to, is very frequently expressed and very pathetically complained of in scripture, particularly, Job xiv. 1, 2. *Man that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

And,

And, verse 10. *Man dieth and wasteth away ;* SERM.
ye, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? XIX.

So, Psal. xxxix. 4, 5. *Lord make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is ; that I may know how frail I am. Behold thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth, and mine age is nothing before thee : verily every man at his best estate, is altogether vanity.* Again, Psal. ciii. 15, 16. the Psalmist says, *As for man his days are as grass ; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth : For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more.* A passage like to which, we have, Isa. xl. 6, 7. *All flesh, i. e. all men, is grass, and all the goodliness thereof, is as the flower of the field : The grass withereth, the flower fadeth ; because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it : surely the people is grass.* Thus we see, we are all frail and mortal, and must certainly die and leave this world, and that in a little, a very little time ; and so the world will, in effect, be ended with regard to us, and every particular person : So true is this assertion of the apostle, *The world passeth away.*

He adds, *and the lust thereof.* As the world passeth away, so the world passeth away, so as to have an end. By the lust of the world, we are to understand those things which he mentions more particularly in the foregoing verse, viz. *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life ;* which

SERM. are said to be of the world, and so are the
 XIX. same, with what he here calls in general the
 lust of it. By the lust of the flesh, it seems,
 we are to understand, all voluptuous enjoy-
 ments which tend to sensuality and intempe-
 rance; by the lust of the eyes, the desire
 of riches, of gold and silver, stately houses,
 splendid furniture, and the like, which tend
 to gratify the eye; and by the pride of life,
 the desire of places of dignity, high titles,
 all the honour, glory and splendor of the
 world, which tends to gratify our pride and
 ambition. These are all fading and perish-
 ing things, and will soon pass away; both
 the things that are lusted after, or minister
 to our lusts, and the lusts themselves, the
 pleasure that is taken in the possession and
 enjoyment of such things. 1. The things
 that minister to our lusts, or are lusted after,
 are all transitory, decaying and perishing
 things; such as the riches, honours and
 pleasures of the world, and the like; these
 are all very precarious, and will, in a very
 short time, certainly leave us, these things
 which are seen, are but temporal: We must
 not expect to enjoy them always, for daily
 experience shows, how vain, fickle and un-
 certain they are. As for riches, they are not
 for ever, they are deservedly called uncer-
 tain riches, they make themselves wings, and
 flee away as an eagle towards heaven, as the
 wise man expresses it: As for honours, those
 who

who enjoy them stand in slippery places ; SERM.
Man being in honour, abideth not : And as XIX.

for the objects that gratify our carnal and sensual appetites, they are fading and perishing things. And then, 2. As the things that are lusted after in this world, are vain and transitory, so the pleasure that is taken in the enjoyment of them, is transitory too, and very short-lived : When the things that minister to our lusts cease, the pleasure taken from the gratification of them must cease of course. And this may be while we live ; the pleasures, honours and enjoyments of this world may leave us before we leave it ; we can be secure of nothing here, though we remain in the world ; those who are rich, and live in all honour and pleasure, may live to be poor and despised, and miserable ; men often outlive their wealth, their honours, and their delights ; but if these should continue as long as they live, they may be rendered altogether incapable of enjoying them, or receiving any pleasure from them. They are none of them a security against pain and sickness, which blunt the edge of all delights, and spoil their relish ; and so grief, trouble and anxiety, often succeed sensual pleasure and voluptuous enjoyments. But however, this is certain, that the things of the world can be enjoyed by us no longer than we continue in it ; and how short and uncertain the time of our

SERM. abode here is, we have already considered.

XIX. Death will put an end to all earthly pleasures and enjoyments; as we pass out of the world, these things will certainly pass away from us; We shall leave them all behind us, and shall never return to them more. Well, therefore, might the Psalmist say, *Surely every man walketh in a vain shew; Surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them,* Psalm xxxix. 6. And very observable to this purpose, is what he elsewhere says, *Psalm xlix. 10. Wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.* And a little lower, verse 16, 17. *Be not thou afraid, when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased: For when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.* And the apostle says, *We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out,* 1 Tim. vi. 7. Thus we see that *the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.*

II. I come now to consider the latter part of the verse, which containeth a remedy against this vanity, or shews us how we may surmount it; *but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.* And here I shall consider, 1st, The persons; *they that do the will of God.* 2^{dly}, Their happiness and privilege; *they abide for ever.*

I. As

i. As to the persons, who are they that SERM.
do the will of God? They who do the will XIX.
of God, are such as do what he requires of
them, for his will is often put for what he
will have us to perform. Now, this will of
God is expressed and declared two ways; by
the light of nature, and in the holy scrip-
tures. 1st, The will of God as to what he
would have us perform and do, is expressed
by the light of nature. Our reason may dis-
cover, and that very easily, in many respects,
what our Creator requires of us: As it teaches
us that he is perfectly good, and just, and
holy, so it will naturally infer, that he re-
quires us, his creatures, to follow, according to
our capacities, what is agreeable to these per-
fections; and will, upon serious reflection,
inform us what more particularly comes un-
der these characters, according to our several
conditions and relations. It will teach us
what is good, and what is evil, what is just,
and what is unjust, what is vice, and to be
avoided, and what is virtue, and to be fol-
lowed, in most particular instances, if we
carefully attend to it, and make use of it;
and whatever right and unprejudiced reason
shall suggest to us in this matter, is the will
of God; and it is easy to see when our rea-
son is prejudiced by any previous passion. But
then, 2^{dly}, The will of God is declared in
his holy word. This contains and makes
known whatever he requires of us. Some

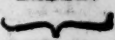
SERM. things are exprefly faid in fcripture to be the
 XIX. will of God; as juftice, mercy and piety,
Micah vi. 8. He hath fhewed thee, O man,
what is good; and what doth the Lord require
of thee, but to do juftly, and love mercy, and
to walk humbly with thy God? So holinefs,
 purity and fobriety is the will of God, *1 Thef.*
iv. 3. For this is the will of God, even your
fanctification, that ye fhould abftain from for-
nication. And it is the will of God that we
 praife him and give thanks unto him, *chap.*
v. 18. In every thing give thanks; for this is
the will of God in Chrift Jefus concerning
you. And, *1 Pet. ii. 15.* the apoftle fays,
For fo is the will of God, that with well-doing
ye may put to f Silence the ignorance of foolifh
men. But, befides this, every particular pre-
 cept, or command in the holy fcripture is
 expreffive of the divine will, and fhews what
 God requires of us. Thus then thofe who
 do the will of God, are fuch as fincerely
 conform to what he has enjoin'd, both by the
 light of nature, and in his holy word: They
 are fuch as endeavour to form juft notions of
 their duty, and to practice accordingly. They
 follow the free and impartial dictates of right
 reason, with regard to what they fhould do,
 and what they fhould avoid. They confider
 what is agreeable to the nature of things, and
 to the feveral relations they ftand in, and
 make that the rule of their converfation.
 Further, they are fuch as conform to what
 he

he requires in his word, who make that the SERM.
rule of their actions, and endeavour to obey XIX.
all the divine commands therein delivered ;
who avoid and abstain from whatever he has
forbidden, and sincerely comply with what
he has made their duty. More particularly,
they are such who *deny ungodliness and world-
ly lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly in
the world* ; they forsake sin, and follow after
holiness. They worship God in sincerity,
and make conscience of performing all the
duties of religion ; they preserve a due reve-
rence for his supreme majesty, and pay all
homage and adoration to him ; they pray to
him, and praise his holy name, and give him
humble and hearty thanks for all his mercies
and favours. They also sincerely perform
the duties they owe to their neighbour ; they
love their neighbour as themselves ; they ab-
stain from all unjust and unrighteous actions,
and maintain justice and equity in all their
dealings ; they are of a kind and good dispo-
sition, and exercise works of charity and mer-
cy ; they are so far from injuring any, that
they sincerely desire the true welfare of all,
and sincerely endeavour to do to others, as
they would have others to do to them. And
then, as to the government of themselves,
they maintain temperance and sobriety, hu-
mility and patience, contentedness and mo-
deration in the use of all worldly things ;
they abstain from all impurity and excess,
preserve

SERM. things are expressly said in scripture to be the

XIX. will of God; as justice, mercy and piety,

Micah vi. 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? So holiness, purity and sobriety is the will of God, 1 Thes. iv. 3. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication. And it is the will of God that we praise him and give thanks unto him, chap. v. 18. In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. And, 1 Pet. ii. 15. the apostle says, For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. But, besides this, every particular precept, or command in the holy scripture is expressive of the divine will, and shews what God requires of us. Thus then those who do the will of God, are such as sincerely conform to what he has enjoined, both by the light of nature, and in his holy word: They are such as endeavour to form just notions of their duty, and to practice accordingly. They follow the free and impartial dictates of right reason, with regard to what they should do, and what they should avoid. They consider what is agreeable to the nature of things, and to the several relations they stand in, and make that the rule of their conversation. Further, they are such as conform to what he

he requires in his word, who make that the SERM.
rule of their actions, and endeavour to obey XIX.
all the divine commands therein delivered; 
who avoid and abstain from whatever he has
forbidden, and sincerely comply with what
he has made their duty. More particularly,
they are such who *deny ungodliness and world-
ly lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly in
the world*; they forsake sin, and follow after
holiness. They worship God in sincerity,
and make conscience of performing all the
duties of religion; they preserve a due reve-
rence for his supreme majesty, and pay all
homage and adoration to him; they pray to
him, and praise his holy name, and give him
humble and hearty thanks for all his mercies
and favours. They also sincerely perform
the duties they owe to their neighbour; they
love their neighbour as themselves; they ab-
stain from all unjust and unrighteous actions,
and maintain justice and equity in all their
dealings; they are of a kind and good dispo-
sition, and exercise works of charity and mer-
cy; they are so far from injuring any, that
they sincerely desire the true welfare of all,
and sincerely endeavour to do to others, as
they would have others to do to them. And
then, as to the government of themselves,
they maintain temperance and sobriety, hu-
mility and patience, contentedness and mo-
deration in the use of all worldly things;
they abstain from all impurity and excess,
preserve

SERM. preserve a holy conversation, set their affection on things above, and not on things on the earth. Thus we see who they are that do the will of God, *viz.* such as obey his commandments, and serve him in holiness and righteousness. But let it be observed, that we should do this will of God from the heart; we should be sincere in it, should be constant in it; should oppose the customs and examples of the world for the sake of it, and should let no worldly consideration whatsoever, no reproach or persecution turn us aside from it.

2. We come now to consider the happiness and privilege of such persons, *they abide for ever: He that doth the will of God, abideth for ever*, or, shall abide for ever. This is put in opposition to the world's passing away. Tho' the world, and all worldly things are transitory and fading, and will have an end, and worldly men, who mind nothing but this world, shall perish, yet he who sincerely obeys God, and does his will, shall endure for ever. But how do those who do God's will abide for ever? Do they not die, and leave this world as well as other men? True, they do so; but tho' they abide not here for ever, they shall live for ever in the world to come; they shall rise again, and that to immortality. All men indeed shall rise again, and be restored to life; but the wicked shall rise, only to be condemned to a second death

all Worldly Enjoyments.

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death, to be punished with everlasting de-
struction ; whilst the righteous, or those who
do the will of God, shall rise again to life
eternal. This happy state was purchased by
Christ, and revealed by him, *he brought life
and immortality to light thro' the gospel* ; and
it is all along declared to belong to such as
sincerely do what God requires of them, and
to such only *eternal life is indeed the gift of God
through Jesus Christ our Lord* ; but it is given
only to such as *have their fruit unto holiness*.
See *Matt. vii. 21. Not every one that saith
unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the king-
dom of heaven ; but he that doth the will of my
Father which is in heaven, (he shall enter into
the heavenly kingdom.)* So, *Matt. xxv. ult.*
*These shall go away into everlasting punish-
ment ; but the righteous into life eternal.* And
to the same purpose is that, *John v. 28, 29.*
*—The hour is coming, in the which all that
are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall
come forth ; they that have done good unto the
resurrection of life ; and they that have done
evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.* And
so we read, *Rom. ii. 6, 7. your God, Who
will render to every man according to his deeds :*
*To them, who by patient continuance in well-
doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immor-
tality ; eternal life.* Thus they who do the
will of God shall abide for ever in heaven,
shall have everlasting life, and shall obtain an
inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and
that

SERM. *that fadeth not away.* They shall not be sub-

XIX. ject to the vanity and death as they were in this transitory world ; but *having obtained the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies,* by a resurrection, they shall triumph over death, shall live for ever, and shall enjoy a blessed immortality. I say, a blessed immortality ; for as they shall abide for ever, so all good things will abide with them for ever ; as they shall live for ever, so they shall be for ever happy : Evil and trouble shall never come near them, they shall be continually free from pain, anxiety and sorrow ; eternal rest and peace shall be their portion, and perfect joy and felicity shall ever attend them. They shall have a crown of glory that fadeth not away, shall perpetually solace themselves with the various delights of the heavenly kingdom, and shall be eternally happy in the presence of God, *in which there is fulness of joy, and at whose right-hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

Thus have we briefly considered these words of the apostle, and shall now conclude with a word or two of application.

I. Hence we see what folly it is to set our hearts on worldly things. We have heard how transitory and uncertain these things are, and how soon they have an end ; *the world passeth away, and the lust thereof* ; all the riches, honours and enjoyments of this world are fading and perishing things ; we may have them

them to-day, but may be deprived of them SERM.
to-morrow ; they are liable to every acci- XIX.
dent, and the greatest uncertainty ; they may

soon pass away from us, or, however, the
pleasure of enjoying them may soon be lost.

Thus uncertain and transitory are the things
of this world, even suppose we continue in
it ; and therefore, if we go no farther, it
would be great folly and imprudence to set
our minds too much upon them. But this is
not all ; for earthly things are not only in
themselves of a transitory and perishing na-
ture, but, when death comes upon us, we
are sure to leave them all ; and, as it is most
certain that we must all die, and that in a
very little time at furthest, so we know not
but we may die much sooner ; our lives are
at best but very uncertain, and we may even
suddenly be snatched from all our enjoyments
here. And this makes it the height of folly
and madness for any one to please himself
overmuch with such things, especially if we
consider that a certain state of felicity is set
before us in the world to come. And yet
how many are there, how many that profess
strict christianity are there, whose actions dis-
cover that their affections are inordinately set
on worldly things, and that they place their
happiness too much on the enjoyment of
them ? Else, what means all their immode-
rate pursuits after them, their excessive joy
in the possession of them, and their excessive
grief

SERM. grief when they are deprived of them? I say,
 XIX. excessive; for to be moderately affected with
 these things, is certainly lawful. Moderate
 and due care about the things of this life is
 very requisite and commendable, and is cer-
 tainly our duty; but when any one goes so
 far in the pursuit of them as to neglect things
 of higher concern, and places all his happi-
 ness in these perishing things, he is certainly
 guilty of a great folly and crime. What fol-
 ly is it for us to set our hearts on that which
 is so very uncertain, and which we are sure
 in a little time to leave? If we do thus, as
 the apprehensions of parting from it will
 make us still uneasy in the possession of it,
 so the certain loss of it, at last, will fill our
 minds with immoderate grief and anxiety,
 and we shall have nothing beyond it to raise
 our expectations to.

2. We may here see the excellency of true
 religion. This provides a remedy against all
 the inconstancy and vanity of earthly things:
The world passeth away, and the lust thereof,
 worldly men, who mind nothing but the
 world, shall perish, together with their lusts;
but he that doth the will of God, he that sin-
 cerely addict himself to a pious, holy and
 righteous course of life, and endeavours to
 obey all God's commandments, *he shall abide*
for ever, shall have everlasting life, and a
 blessed and glorious immortality. God has
 graciously promised this to such persons, and
 they

they shall certainly enjoy it. And the excellency of true religion will yet further appear, if we consider, that as those who practise it shall certainly be for ever happy in heaven, so they may have such a blessed hope and true prospect of it, as will bear them up amidst all the troubles of this life; they may so rejoice in hope of the glory of God, as that no affliction shall cast them down, no evil shall terrify them; but, having their firm trust in God, and the comfortable expectation of future bliss, they shall never be moved, but may be easy in the hands of divine providence, in the midst of the greatest publick afflictions, calamities and desolations.

SER. M.
XIX.

3. To conclude therefore; let us be induced to set light by the things of this world, and, by the exercise of religion and virtue, to seek a more fixed and settled state of happiness in the world to come. Let us not set our affection on earthly things, seeing they are so vain, transitory and perishing; but since a durable state of felicity is proposed to us, let us raise our minds to that, and, by doing the will of God, endeavour to obtain it: Let us set our affections on things above, and in the way of our duty seek them; in the way of our duty, I say, *for without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* Let us do the will of God from the heart, seeing so great a reward is promised to them that do it. Let us devote ourselves sincerely to his service, and make
con-

SERM. conscience of obeying all his commandments ;

XIX. let us follow after righteousness and holiness,

Wcharity and sobriety, and have our *conversation as becomes the gospel of Christ* ; and let us persist in this course, notwithstanding all opposition ; and if we have in any respect deviated from it, let us return to it again. If we thus do we shall not only have our hearts fixed, trusting in God here, but shall be eternally happy in the world to come ; we shall unterrified behold the heavens and the earth on fire, when all the wicked shall be destroyed ; shall be preserved from the dismal effects of this conflagration, and shall be for ever with the Lord, in the enjoyment of consummate bliss and happiness.

SERMON XX.

Proofs of the Resurrection and Final Judgment.

ACTS xvii. 31.

Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

22

THESE words are part of that excellent speech, which the apostle Paul made to the men of *Athens*, a famous and learned city of *Greece*. He being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, had preached the gospel in many towns and cities, and converted many to the faith, and then returned to *Antioch*, from whence he was first sent out; and after some time, he determined to go again, and visit the brethren in every city, where he had preached the word of the Lord; and passing through many places, he, at length, came to *Theſſalonica*, where he

SERM.
XX.

E e preached

SERM. preached the gospel to the *Jews*, as his
 XX. manner was, wherever he came, to preach
 the word first to them. By his preaching,
 some were induced to believe, but those
 who believed not, made a great disturbance
 in the city upon his account, and raised a
 tumult against him, and *Silas* his companion.
 Hereupon, the brethren immediately sent
 them away by night unto *Berea*; and when
 they were come thither, they preached there
 also in the synagogue of the *Jews*, and con-
 verted many. *But when the Jews of Thes-
 salonica, had knowledge that the word of God
 was preached of Paul at Berea, they came
 thither also, and stirred up the people; and
 then immediately the brethren sent away Paul,
 to go as it were to the sea. And they that con-
 ducted him brought him to Athens, where,
 whilst he waited for Silas and Timotheus, his
 spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the
 city wholly given to idolatry, which put him
 upon disputing in the synagogue with the
 Jews, and with the devout persons, and with
 them that met with him. Whereupon cer-
 tain of the Epicureans and Stoicks encoun-
 tered him, and brought him to Areopagus,
 and demanded of him an account of his doc-
 trine. Then the apostle, in a very excellent
 speech, declares to them, him whom they
 ignorantly worshipped, reproves their super-
 stition and idolatry, and, at last, tells them,
 that though God had, indeed, winked at
 those*

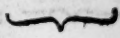
those times of ignorance, yet now he com- SERM.
mands all men every where to repent, Be- XX.
cause he hath appointed a day in the which he
will judge the world in righteousness, by that
man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath
given assurance unto all men, in that he hath
raised him from the dead.

That there is a judgment to come, may be gathered from the consideration of the justice of God, as also of his goodness. We can have no notion of a supreme Being, without conceiving, at the same time, that he is perfectly just and righteous, and perfectly good; and as he is such an one, he must be also a lover of righteousness and goodness, wherever it is found, and must constantly hate what is contrary to it; and consequently that he will not acquit and reward the wicked, the obstinate and refractory transgressors of his laws, and condemn and punish the good and righteous, those who turn to him, and sincerely endeavour to obey his commandments; or that he will not suffer persons of so different dispositions and behaviour, to go always undistinguished, without putting any difference between them, by shewing his indignation against the wicked, and giving tokens and pledges of his love and favour to the righteous: But where do we find this difference made in this life? Are not the righteous subject to as many troubles, calamities and afflictions as the wicked? And

SERM. do not the wicked enjoy as much ease and

XX. prosperity as the righteous? So that, as the

wise man says, No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. For all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; and as is the good, so is the sinner, Eccles. ix. 1, 2. Some good men, do indeed, live prosperously and happily here; but then may we not observe as many of the wicked and ungodly so living? and many wicked men are afflicted and distressed, but are there not as many righteous in the same circumstances? Yea, it is commonly seen that the righteous are mostly afflicted and troubled, and the wicked mostly enjoy ease and pleasure, and a prosperous state of affairs; *Their strength is firm, as the Psalmist speaks, they are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men.* For the righteous are not only liable to more common calamities than the wicked, but are also very frequently much persecuted, injured and distressed by them. Now this being considered, it is plain, that if God be just and righteous, if he has a regard to his own honour, as governor and lawgiver, and to the good of the whole order of beings under his government: If he be good, and must needs love them who sincerely love and obey him, and have a just regard for his honour and authority; if God be such an
one,

one, I say, as he certainly is, it is plain, SERM.
 that seeing the course of affairs in this world, XX.
 is so uncertain, as that we cannot by it, 
 discern between the good and the bad; and
 if we consider it in itself, there is such an
 unequal distribution of prosperity and adver-
 sity here, that the good are mostly afflicted;
 while the evil are commonly in a flourishing
 condition; there must be a time of retri-
 bution after this life, when all shall give an
 account to their Creator, and be rewarded
 according to their works: When a manifest
 discrimination shall be made between the just
 and unjust, when the wicked shall no more
 be happy, nor the good miserable; but these
 be rewarded, and the others justly punished.

But as the future judgment may thus be
 proved by reason, from the consideration
 of the justice and equity of the divine Be-
 ing, together with the unequal distribution
 of affairs in this life, so it is frequently ex-
 pressed and asserted in the divine revelation.
 This judgment was spoke of in very ear-
 ly times of the world, by *Enoch* the se-
 venth from *Adam*, who prophesied, saying,
Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of
his saints, to execute judgment upon all, &c.
Jude 14, 15. It is spoken of by the wise
 man, and there are many hints of it in the
 prophets: But in the new Testament, it is
 most clearly and expressly asserted, and often
 laid down as a main article of the christian

SERM. faith, and a most important truth. Our Sa-

XX. viour often speaks of it in a very solemn manner, and gives us some description of it, *Matt. xxv. 31. to the end.* The resurrection of the dead and the eternal judgment, are reckoned by the apostle, two of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, *Heb. vi. 2.* and, accordingly, all the apostles in their preaching, insisted very much upon this, as the apostle *Paul* does in this his speech to the heathen, telling them, that God had appointed a day in the which he would judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he had ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in raising him from the dead.

Here we have, in the first place, the supreme Author of this judgment, to wit, God; it is God, who has appointed the time for this judgment; and our Saviour tells us, he had reserved the knowledge of this time to himself, *Matt. xxiv. 36. But of that day and hour (or time) knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only.* It is he who has ordained the person, who is to be his representative in this judgment, and he, at the time appointed, will judge the world by this person. Thus God is the supreme judge of the world; he will judge men by Jesus Christ. The apostle calls him the judge of all, *Heb. xii. 32. To God the judge of all.* And the Father

is said to judge according to every man's work, SERM.

1 Pet. i. 17. As God is our supreme crea- XX.

tor, our supreme lawgiver and governor, so he will be our supreme judge; the judgment to come, is ordained and decreed by him, and will be managed and executed by his authority; and as he has an original right to be our judge, so he has originally in himself, all perfections necessary for such judgment. He is omniscient, he knows all things; he is acquainted with all our ways; beholds all, even our most secret actions, and knows the very thoughts and designs of our heart: *He searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings*: He is almighty; has power and authority; is able to bring all men before him, and to execute on them whatever his just judgment shall determine: He is perfectly just and righteous; he has no respect to persons, and so will impartially reward every one according to his works.

In the next place, we are to consider the person whom God has ordained to be the immediate judge of the world. *He has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world, by that man whom he hath ordained*. This person by whom God will judge the world, is Jesus Christ our Saviour, who came into the world, and suffered, and died

SERM. for it. Though God be the supreme judge
XX. of all men, yet he will not judge them immediately, but by his Son Jesus Christ; hence this work of judging the world, is often ascribed to Christ in the gospel, he being appointed and constituted the immediate judge of it: Hence we are told by our Saviour, that *the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and hath given him authority to execute judgment*, John v. 22,—27. And the apostle Peter, Acts x. 42. says, that *they were commanded to preach unto the people, and to testify, that it was he, that is, Christ, who was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead*. As he is our lawgiver and governor, as God has made him both Lord and Christ, and has *exalted him at his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour*, so it is very agreeable, that he should also be constituted our Judge; as he humbled himself for our sakes, and came into the world to procure for us, and offer to us the terms of salvation; so is it requisite that he should be authorised to determine our state at last, according as we have behaved ourselves here, and have complied with, or rejected these terms; and as this judgment, this great work of judging the world, is committed to Christ, so he is every way fitted and qualified for this vast undertaking; he has all manner of abilities that are necessary for the discharge of so important

portant an office ; his wisdom and know-
ledge, his power, his justice, equity and
impartiality render him every way capable

SERM.

XX.

of it ; he has all power given to him in
heaven and on earth ; he can search the reins
and the heart, and so will judge, not ac-
cording to outward appearance, but by the
heart ; he will examine into the secret springs
and motives of action, will weigh every cir-
cumstance of them, and will judge accord-
ingly ; he will judge with equity and im-
partiality ; he will not respect the person of
any ; of the proud, or rich, or honourable,
nor of the poor and low, and despised ; it is
impossible he should be imposed on ; no
bribes will corrupt him ; he will, by no
means, be induced to do unrighteousness in
judgment : Thus, as Christ is ordained to
this high office, so he is every way a fit per-
son for it. And when the time comes for
him to execute it, he will come in great
glory, in heavenly pomp and splendor ; he
will come in his Father's glory, in his own
glory, and will have the glorious company
of the heavenly hosts for his attendants,

*Matt. xxv. 31. When the Son of man shall
come in his glory, and all the holy angels with
him, then shall he set upon the throne of his
glory. The Lord himself, says the apostle,
shall descend from heaven with a shout, with
the voice of the archangel, and with the trump
of God : He shall be revealed from heaven
with*

SERM. *with his mighty angels, in flaming fire.* This
 XX. is his second coming, so often spoken of in
 the new Testament. Though his first coming was in a mean and low condition; this his appearing will be in the greatest glory and majesty. Thus have we seen who is ordained of God to be judge in this great day.

In the next place, let us consider the persons to be judged, which are all the world. *God has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world, i. e. all men, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, noble and ignoble, and even every individual of every age and nation.* In this judgment, every man shall be rewarded according to his works: At this great day, *all nations shall be gathered before the Son of man to be judged, Matt. xxv. 32.* The apostle says, *We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and every one of us, shall give account of himself to God.* No person will be excepted; none will be excused; none will be so mean, as not to be then taken notice of, how obscurely soever they lived here; they will not then lie hid, but will be discovered and brought to judgment, none will be so great, so rich, or so potent, as to be able to escape this impartial trial; but the rich, the mighty, and the honourable, the kings and princes, and judges of the earth, will all be summoned to this awful tribunal. Finally, all, of whatsoever rank,
 station

station or condition in this world, of whatso- SERM.
ever nation, party, or persuasion, both *Jews* and XX.
Gentiles, bond and free, good and bad, shall
stand before Christ, to be judged in this great
day. Again, the persons to be judged, are said
to be the quick and the dead; Christ is or-
dained of God, to be the Judge of quick
and dead, 2 *Tim. iv. 1. I charge thee there-
fore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ,
who shall judge the quick and the dead at his
appearing, and his kingdom. 1 Pet. iv. 5. Who
shall give account to him that is ready to judge
the quick and the dead.* Some will be alive at
the coming of Christ, and those shall all be
judged; and besides all the dead, all that
have died from the beginning of the world,
to that time, will also be brought to judg-
ment; and to this end, they must rise again,
they must come forth of their graves, and
be restored to life. The resurrection, must
of necessity, precede the last judgment:
Hence the apostle, in his enumeration of the
first principles of the christian doctrine,
places it before it, *Of resurrection of the
dead, and of the eternal judgment.* And *John*,
in his vision of this solemn transaction, says,
*The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and
death and hell, i. e. the grave, delivered up
the dead which were in them, and they were
judged every man according to their works,*
Rev. xx. 13. After they are raised, they shall,
together with those who were alive at Christ's
coming

SERM. coming, be brought in a solemn manner before his tribunal, and be made to appear there, 2 Cor. v. 10. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.*

The things for which we must be judged, are all things with regard to our behaviour here in this life: We must appear before Christ's tribunal, that *every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that be hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

1st, We must give an account of all our actions, of all that we have done and transacted here. Some addict themselves to the practice of good works, to holy and religious actions, and to charitable and righteous deeds, and others to the practice of those things that are wicked and unlawful. Now an account will be required of us in the day of judgment, of what kind our actions are, whether they be good or evil, that we may be rewarded or punished accordingly. Thus *Enoch* prophesied, that the Lord would come, *to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodlily committed.* And we shall be judged, not only for those deeds that are more open and manifest, but also for our most secret actions, that come not within the observation of our fellow creatures, *Eccles. xii. 14. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

2^{dly},

2dly, We shall give an account of our SERM.
words. Men are apt to make very light of XX.
their words, especially those that are spoken
in a jesting and merry way, but it is certain,
that by our words, we may do a great deal
of good, or a great deal of hurt; and that
ill words spoken in jest, may be very pernicious
and destructive of piety and virtue,
and therefore, it is reasonable, that we should
be judged even for our words; as our Saviour
tells us we shall, *Matt. xii. 36, 37.*
*But I say unto you, that for every idle word
that men shall speak, they shall give account
thereof in the day of judgment: For by thy
words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words
thou shalt be condemned.* By idle words, we
are not to understand all words that do not
immediately tend to the good and edification
of others, but false or slanderous, or such
like wicked words, that tend to the hurt,
injury and defamation of others; and it is
reasonable we should give an account of such
words as these. *Enoch says, The Lord cometh
to convince men of all their hard speeches, which
they have spoken against him, as well as of all
their ungodly deeds.*

3dly, We shall give an account in the day
of judgment, of the secret designs, purposes
and intentions of the heart; persons may have
very bad intentions, and yet may never be
able to accomplish their wicked designs; but
nevertheless, they are as guilty in the sight
of

SERM. of God, who searcheth the heart, as if they
 XX. had actually perpetrated the evil designed by
 them, and shall be judged accordingly; yea,
 oftentimes, a very bad design lies hid under
 a good action; and this will by no means
 prevent a person that has such an ill inten-
 tion, from being accountable for it: God
 will judge even the secrets of men by Jesus
 Christ. See also what the apostle says, *1 Cor.*
iv. 5. Therefore judge nothing before the time,
until the Lord come, who both will bring to light
the hidden things of darkness, and will make
manifest the counsels of the hearts.

4thly, We shall also give an account for
 our omission of duties, or the neglect of those
 things that God requires of us: It is cer-
 tainly a sin to neglect what God has com-
 manded, as well as to do what he has for-
 bid: As therefore, the omission of duties
 makes us criminal, we shall, without doubt,
 be judged for it. Thus in our Saviour's de-
 scription of the last judgment, *Matt. xxv.*
 he assigns the omission of what those persons
 ought to have done, as the reason of their
 condemnation, verse 42, 43. *For I was an*
hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was
thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a
stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and
ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye
visited me not.

In the next place, let us take notice, that
 the apostle says, *God will judge the world in*
righteousness.

righteousness. There is no doubt, but this SERM.
judge of all the earth will do right; and this XX.
he will do in this great day, by assigning
every one his portion of happiness or misery,
according to his works; he will, without respect
of persons, judge according to every man's work;
and will reward them according to it; he will
reward them according to the nature or quality of
their works, as they are good or bad, by giving
eternal life and happiness to the righteous, and
inflicting misery and eternal death on the wicked;
he will reward them according to the degrees of
their works, by bestowing a greater degree of
happiness upon those who have excelled in
goodness and piety, and rendering them more
miserable, who have been more wicked. Where
there is an honest mind and good disposition,
he will make all reasonable allowances for
frailty, infirmity and temptation, and he will
have no regard to a fair outward appearance,
where sincerity and an upright mind is wanting.
He will judge equitably according to the
several circumstances and conditions of men,
and the different advantages that they enjoy.
Thus our Saviour declares, that it shall be
more tolerable for *Tyre* and *Sidon*, and for the
land of *Sodom*, in the day of judgment, than
for *Chorazin*, *Bethsaida* and *Capernaum*, who
had the advantages of his preaching and miracles.
Finally, God will judge men by the dispen-
sation

SERM. sation they were under ; he will not judge
 XX. those by the law, who were never under the
 law ; neither will he judge them by the
 gospel, who never heard of it : But as the
 apostle says, *As many as have sinned without
 law, shall also perish without law ; and as
 many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged
 by the law :* And I may add, what is agreea-
 ble to reason and the gospel, that as many as
 have sinned under the gospel, or having the
 gospel, shall be judged by the gospel. Thus
 will God *judge the world in righteousness by
 the man whom he hath ordained.*

The apostle adds, *Whereof he hath given
 assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised
 him from the dead.* The resurrection of Christ
 is a sufficient confirmation of this truth, that
 God will judge the world in righteousness by
 him. For, 1st, His resurrection is the pledge
 of ours, and what should we rise again for
 but to be judged ? God has shewn his pow-
 er in raising Christ from the dead ; and the
 same power is able also to raise us, and by
 the resurrection of Christ, it appears that
 our resurrection is designed. But, 2^{dly}, The
 resurrection of Christ is a confirmation of
 his whole doctrine, and the judgment to come
 being a chief part of his doctrine, it must be a
 confirmation of this in particular : Our Sa-
 viour often insisted on this judgment, and told
 his disciples, that he was ordained of God, to
 be the judge of the world ; and God by raising
 him

and Final Judgment.

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him from the dead, confirmed this doctrine, SERM.
and shewed that what he said was true. XX.

Thus have I considered these words, and shall now conclude with a brief exhortation.

Let us often meditate on the day of judgment; let us by the consideration of it, be induced to repent of our sins and turn to God, and to keep a strict watch over all our actions. Let us often meditate on the day of judgment, this is a very awful subject, and of very great concernment to us all, it being by this judgment, that our whole future state will be determined and fixed certainly; therefore, we should allow it a chief place in our thoughts. Shall the light of nature teach us in part, that God will call all men to an account? And shall the christian revelation, so abundantly confirmed by miracles, most expressly and frequently insist upon it, as a matter of the last importance? Shall God give us full assurance of the certainty of it, by raising Christ from the dead? And shall not we think it a matter worthy our most serious meditation? Certainly as death, so the judgment to come, is a very awful thing, and should frequently be remembered and thought on by us. And we should be induced thereby to repent of our sins, and to turn to God. The apostle says, *God now commands men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world*

SERM. in righteousness. Certainly then the conside-

XX. ration of this judgment should be an inducement to us to repent; in this judgment God will reward every one according to his works; if therefore, we persist in a course of sin and disobedience to his laws, what sentence can we expect to have passed on us, but this dreadful one, *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* But if we repent and have our fruit unto holiness, we shall hear that joyful sentence, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.* Let us also, by the consideration of this judgment, be induced to keep a strict watch over all our ways; and be careful how we speak, act, or design; if *God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing,* how careful should we be that all our actions may be agreeable to his law, and such as will be approved by him; if *we must give account of every idle word in the day of judgment,* how should we take care that *we sin not with our tongue;* that we lie not one to another; that we are not guilty of slandering or backbiting our neighbour; and that none of our expressions, not even those that are spoken in jest and for diversion, may offend against charity, purity and true religion: As God knows the very thoughts and designs of our heart,
and

and will call us to an account for them ; SERM.
let us maintain sincerity and uprightness XX.
there. *For if our heart condemn us, God*
is greater than our heart, and knoweth all
things : But if our heart condemn us not,
we may have boldness in the day of judg-
ment, shall have confidence towards God,
and shall assure our hearts before him.

F I N I S.

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the day of judgment, how should we take
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